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THE

LIFE OF

CHARLES STEWART

PARNELL

—BY—

T. P. O'CONNOR, M.P.

WARD, LOCK, BOWDEN & CO., London, New York, and Melbourne.

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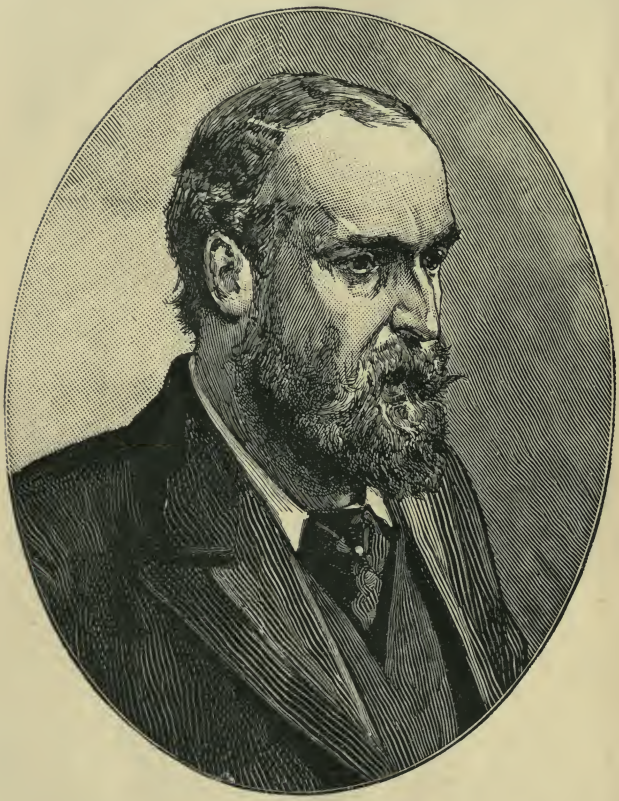

CHARLES STEWART PARNELL.
Born June 29, 1846; Died October 6, 1891.

CHARLES STEWART PARNELL

A Memory.

BY

T. P. O'CONNOR, M.P.

AUTHOR OF

"THE PARNELL MOVEMENT," "LORD BEACONSFIELD: A BIOGRAPHY,"

ETC.

WARD, LOCK, BOWDEN, AND CO.

LONDON, NEW YORK, AND MELBOURNE.

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

BIRTH AND BRINGING-UP 11

CHAPTER II.

ENTRANCE INTO PUBLIC LIFE 32

CHAPTER III.

LEADER 60

CHAPTER IV.

THE UNSELFISH PATRIOT 84

CHAPTER V.

A PRISONER 109

CHAPTER VI.

THE OPENING OF THE TRAGEDY 128

CHAPTER VII.

THE GALWAY ELECTION 157

301

CHAPTER VIII.

PAGE
REACHING THE ZENITH 178

CHAPTER IX.

BLACK RUIN 193

CHAPTER X.

CHARACTERISTICS AND ESTIMATE 213

LIFE OF
CHARLES STEWART PARNELL

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH AND BRINGING-UP.

CHARLES STEWART PARNELL lived, and to some extent died, in mystery; it is not so well known that there is also some mystery about his place of birth. All the biographers put his place of birth at Avondale, at the house of his father, in County Wicklow; but I heard him say himself once that he was not quite certain that this account was correct, and that he thought he had been born at Brighton. It is certain that Brighton always had a great attraction for him, and that he loved to dwell there. Wherever the place, the year of his birth was 1846, and the day June 27.

Avondale, by this time, is well known to the whole world. It is a square mansion, solidly but not in the least beautifully built, but it looks out on a beautiful prospect, and inside, it has several

historical relics of value and interest. It is situated in the centre of a picturesque and historical region. Close by and on the estate that was Mr. Parnell's, is the Vale of Avoca, which Moore's verses have rendered familiar for all time.

Wicklow, it is well-known, was the scene of some of the fiercest fights of the Rebellion of 1798, and of some of the worst atrocities on both sides. The situation of Avondale has always been considered as one of the factors that went to make up the future Irish leader. Several of the servants and farm-hands had heard of the scenes of the Rebellion from their parents; some of the very old had been eye-witnesses.

There was one story which I heard Mr. Parnell tell himself, and which is a picture of the times of the Rebellion, and suggests one of the influences that made him what he afterwards became. It was told him by Hugh Gaffney, who had been in Mr. Parnell's boyhood a gate-keeper at Avondale. Gaffney was old enough to have seen some of the scenes of the Rebellion; and one of his stories was of a man who was taken by the English troops in the neighbourhood. The sentence upon him was that he was to be flogged to death at the end of a cart. The interpretation of the sentence by Colonel Yeo—such was the name of the commander—was that the flogging was to be inflicted on the man's belly instead of on his back. Gaffney saw the rebel flogged from the mill

to the old sentry-box in Rathdrum—the town near which Avondale is situate—and heard the man call out in his agony, "Colonel Yeo! Colonel Yeo!" and appeal for respite from this torture; and also heard Colonel Yeo reject the prayer with savage words; and, finally, saw the man, as he fell at last, with his bowels protruding.

When Mr. Parnell told the story, in his usual tranquil manner, the thought suggested itself to my mind that, at last, I had reached one of the great influences that made Mr. Parnell the man he is, and that in this poor gate-keeper was to be found the early instructor whose lessons imbued the young and impressionable heir of the Parnell name and traditions with the ideas which underlay his public career.

Some miles from Avondale was an old tumble-down, disused, barrack, known as Aughavanna. Mr. Parnell had some grouse-shooting in the neighbourhood, and it was his custom for some years to attend the grouse-shooting regularly, and usually to invite some of his most trusted colleagues to accompany him to Aughavanna. The household arrangements were extremely primitive, and everybody had more or less to cook for himself after the manner of soldiers on a campaign. In the evenings after the sport of the day, it was a favourite custom of Mr. Parnell to speak of the scenes of the rebellion in the district all around, and it was evident that he

had taken pains to acquaint himself well with this chapter at least of Irish history. For years it was probably the one chapter of Irish history with which he was at all familiar.

His ancestry was an even stronger element in the formation of his ideas. The family comes originally from Congleton, in Cheshire; and when Sir Henry Parnell, a relative of Mr. Parnell, about the middle of the present century, accepted a peerage, Lord Congleton was the title he selected. The Parnells, like so many English settlers, became in time more Irish than the Irish themselves. They were a portion of that Irish aristocracy—proud, exclusive, and narrow in many respects—who defended the existence of the Irish Parliament to the very last. For many years, before the Union was proposed, Sir John Parnell was Chancellor of the Irish Exchequer. When Castlereagh proposed the Union, Parnell was naturally one of the men whom he sought to gain. Sir John Barrington, the not very charitable historian of the period, put the word "Incorruptible" after the name of Parnell, in the *catalogue raisonnée* he drew up of the Members of the Irish Parliament. Parnell justified the epithet, for he steadily voted against all the proposals for the destruction of the Irish Parliament.

Sir Henry Parnell was one of the sturdiest supporters of the Catholic claims during the many years he was a Member of the Imperial Parliament.

William Parnell, his brother (grandfather of Charles Stewart), was also a strong supporter of the Catholic claims, and contributed a pamphlet to the literature on the subject; and, finally, John Henry Parnell, Charles's father, was a Liberal, and at one time, sought the representation of Wicklow as a Liberal.

On his mother's side, Mr. Parnell came from a stock, the traditions of which were still more hostile to the existing relations between England and Ireland. His father, travelling in the United States in the forties, met the daughter of Commodore Stewart, promptly fell in love with her, and the two were married in a church on Broadway, New York, which I remember poor Mrs. Parnell once pointed out to me as we drove together to a meeting in that city. In Commodore Stewart, I believe, is to be found the origin of much of Mr. Parnell's character. Even in physical appearance, I think a strong resemblance may be traced. Here is a picture of Commodore Stewart:—

"Commodore Stewart was about five feet nine inches high, and of a dignified and engaging presence. His complexion was fair, his hair chestnut, eyes blue, large, penetrating, and intelligent. The cast of his countenance was Roman, bold, strong, and commanding, and his head finely formed. His control over his passions was truly surprising, and under the most irritating circumstance his oldest seaman never saw a ray of anger

flash from his eye. His kindness, benevolence, and humanity were proverbial, but his sense of justice and the requisitions of duty were as unbending as fate. In the moment of greatest stress and danger he was as cool and quick in judgment as he was utterly ignorant of fear. His mind was acute and powerful, grasping the greatest or smallest subjects with the intuitive mastery of genius."

The history of Commodore Stewart is also instructive, as showing the kind of tradition in which Mr. Parnell was brought up. Shortly after his marriage, he was appointed to the command of the ship "Constitution," to take part in the war of 1815. "What present shall I bring you back," he is reported to have said to his bride. "A British frigate," was the reply. He more than fulfilled the command, for he captured two English vessels, the "Cyan" and the "Levant." This victory was received with the greatest enthusiasm by the American people, and is still greatly celebrated in their history. Stewart was fêted in several great cities; received gold boxes, swords, and freedoms of cities, and the thanks of Congress. He remained one of the national heroes to the end of a very prolonged life. He was known by the endearing sobriquet of "Old Ironsides;" several times was spoken of as a candidate for the Presidency; and when the war of the rebellion broke out, though he was eighty-three,

desired once more to be enlisted in active service, on behalf of the threatened unity of his country. Before I dismiss him, I may repeat another story, which will suggest further resemblance between him and his even more illustrious grandson.

He was once sent to the Mediterranean, and found there was something approaching a mutiny amongst the officers, under a different commodore. He soon came to a definite issue with his subordinates. He ordered a court-martial on a marine to be held on board one of his vessels. The officers preferred to discuss the case at their leisure in a hotel in Naples, and there tried and convicted the marine. The commodore promptly quashed the conviction, and, when the Court passed a series of resolutions, put all the commanding officers of the squadron under arrest. The result was the complete restoration of order, and the approval of Commodore Stewart's conduct by the President and the Cabinet.

There was also an extremely strong resemblance between Mr. Parnell and his mother. Her eyes are blue, and his were brown; but they were alike in the strange inscrutability of their expression. Her face also like his, is as a mask. I saw her sitting opposite to Mr. Dillon, Mr. O'Brien, and the rest of the delegates to America, at one of their meetings, in the very agony of the crisis over the split. Those strange eyes of hers —large, staring, expressionless, weird—haunted

one painfully. There was also the deadly and waxen pallor of complexion which she bequeathed to her son. I was told by one who knew her well, that underneath all this impassivity there was the keenest appreciation of all that was going on; and that while she seemed to dream the long dream of the self-centred Sphinx, she was really watching everything with an intensity of gaze that came from the depths of her own soul, and sought the depths of the souls of others.

I have always thought that in physique and in character, Mr. Parnell was more of an American than of any other nationality. Curiously enough, he had no love for America—at least, as a place of residence. The heat of the climate, the stoves, and, of course, the terribly long journeys, always wore upon him; and he expressed in 1880 his delight at finding himself once more at home. In those days he was intensely fond of his own place in Ireland. "There's no place like home," he said to me then, and he repeated the phrase many a time afterwards. The day was to come when a fatal episode was to, if not destroy, at least paralyse this strong passion like so many others.

Wicklow and her historic, beautiful and bracing hills, was a spot in which he spent many years of his early manhood; and he always returned there with delight during the Parliamentary recesses, in the first days of his political life. By-and-by Avondale knew him no more.

Ireland, with the vast changes of fortune which extravagance, agitation, the upheaval of classes and emigration, have between them produced, is a country of shabby-genteel and modern ruins. In no country, perhaps, in the world are there so many remains of broken-down houses, streets, and whole towns. The landed gentry have suffered as severely as the rest of the population, and few of their houses that I have seen do not bear upon them the mark of neglect, desolation, and the successful inroads of poverty. In time, this came to be the air of Avondale, too ; the paintless door, with a damaged knocker, and the rooms, sparely furnished with antique things, told too plainly of a master that was always absent.

But though intensely Irish, I have always thought—as I have said—that in physique and in character, Mr. Parnell was, above all things, American. That slight frame, inspired by inflexible resolution and dauntless courage, was the type of the strange, and picturesque, and daring race which combines such extraordinary strength and enterprise of character with a physique more delicate in form and appearance than that of any other nationality in the Arian world. The pallid complexion was also the typical complexion of America, and, finally, the death-like grip of the will was suggestive of the iron resolution which is one of America's marked national characteristics.

One of the curiosities of Mr. Parnell was that

the country against which he fought for the greater part of his life—and to which he never probably got assimilated or attached—was the country in which he spent the greater part of his earliest and most impressionable years. One of the many disadvantages under which he laboured when he first attempted to enter the ranks of the popular party, was that he spoke with an ultra-English accent. An Englishman does not know how much this means to an Irishman. The first day I came to London, I was astonished beyond measure when I heard an ordinary police-constable speak with a strong English accent; I was still more astonished when, entering a coffee-house, I heard the same tones uttered by people whose clothes and demeanour showed they belonged to the poorer classes. In Ireland, the English accent is the accent of the upper classes; it is associated with the domination of the landlords and with the ultra-English prejudices with which they used to be imbued. The young aristocrat with the strong English accent, then, seemed to have all the outward seeming of an enemy of the people; and it required some faith to believe that inside there could beat a genuine Irish heart.

When he was six years of age, Mr. Parnell was placed at school in Yeovil, Somersetshire. Next, he was under the charge of the Rev. Mr. Barton, at Kirk-Langley, Derbyshire; next, under the Rev. Mr. Wishaw, in Oxfordshire; and, finally, he

went to Cambridge University—the *alma mater* of his father. Very little is known of his undergraduate career at Cambridge, and he himself very seldom alluded to it. He said to me once that he thought a good deal more about cricket than about his studies while he was there. There certainly never was a man who gave a less impression of academic training or inclinations. It is doubtful if he ever read a poem or a novel in the whole course of his life; he never mentioned Shakespeare in all my acquaintance with him; he probably never read even Thomas Moore; and the one poetical quotation that stands to his credit—except, I believe, a very bad paraphrase of Portia's plea for mercy, at an amnesty meeting in Dublin—is two very hackneyed lines of Moore. French he spoke very slowly and very indifferently.

On the other hand, it was a mistake to suppose that he had not read a great deal and was not a well-informed man; but his reading was none of it literary, the essentially practical mind was interested only in practical things. When he was in Kilmainham, he read Irish history for the first time, and he told me himself that he never knew the merits or details of the struggle between O'Connell and the young Ireland party until that period. It is significant of his views of things that he thought O'Connell was right in that struggle and the fiery young Irelanders wrong. But, all the same, he astonished his fellow-prisoners

by the diversity and extent of his knowledge on many subjects. He would impart his knowledge, too, with a curious simplicity, the result of a mind that was naturally very simple, and that was quite free from any sense of the ridiculous. One of the most comic conversations that was ever probably heard was one between him and Mr. Healy on agriculture. Mr. Parnell had been a practical farmer during a portion of his life, and could talk learnedly about the rearing of pigs, the calving of cows, and the top-dressing of land. Tim, reared in town and offices, was, like most of the other leaders of the Agrarian movement, unable to tell the difference between a horse and a cow, or between a field of potatoes and of oats. Parnell quite gravely answered all the questions that Tim put to him, explaining all these mysteries in very simple and intelligible language. This conversation took place, I should add, at the brighter and pleasanter period of Parnell's life—the period when he was still the constant companion and the agreeable and modest associate of his colleagues.

I find in a recent number of the *Pall Mall Budget* the following interesting passage :—

"An anecdote which has been told of Mr. Parnell in his cricketing days well illustrates some other sides of the man in showing his readiness to take an advantage, and the native stubbornness and self-will of his character. 'Before Mr.

Parnell entered politics he was pretty well known' (wrote "An Ulster Loyalist" some years ago) 'in the province of Leinster in the commendable character of a cricketer. He was captain of the Wicklow eleven, and in those days a very ardent cricketer. We considered him ill-tempered and a little hard in his conduct of that pastime. For example, when the next bat was not up to time, Mr. Parnell, as captain of the fielders, used to claim a wicket. Of course, he was within his right in doing so, but his doing it was anything but relished in a country where the game is never played on the assumption that this rule will be enforced. In order to win a victory he did not hesitate to take advantage of the strict letter of the law. On one occasion, a match was arranged between the Wicklow team and an eleven of the Phœnix Club, to be played on the ground of the latter in the Phœnix Park. Mr. Parnell's men, with great trouble and inconvenience, many of them having to take long drives in the early morning, assembled on the ground. A dispute occurred between Mr. Parnell and the captain of the Phœnix team. The Wicklow men wished their own captain to give in and let the match proceed. Mr. Parnell was stubborn, and, rather than give up his point, marched his growling eleven back. That must have been a pleasant party so returning without their expected day's amusement; but the captain did not care.' In later years, Mr. Parnell

was to use the Irish party much as he used the Wicklow eleven."

Mr. Parnell was apparently in no great hurry to enter political life; and it is probably doubtful if for some years he ever intended to do so. He was a shy, reserved, and rather gawky lad in his early youth. His mother lived at Temple Street, Dublin, and early gave indications of her political sympathies. These were the days of Fenianism; and she is reported to have offered her house as a refuge to some of the leaders of whom the police were in search.

Her daughter, Fanny Parnell, alone in the family seems to have had literary capacity, and is the authoress of several fine poems. She was one of the occasional contributors in verse to the *Irish People*, the newspaper organ of the Fenian party; and there is a story of her coming to the office once, very heavily veiled to conceal her identity. In 1867 took place the execution of Allen, Larkin and O'Brien, at Manchester. The event excited extraordinary feeling in Ireland. Funeral processions, vast in number and imposing by their spirit of profound grief and fierce resentment, took place all over Ireland, until they were finally stopped by the authorities. This episode is said to have profoundly stirred Mr. Parnell, among others; and in a volume I have written, I have attributed the birth of Mr. Parnell's strong national feeling to that hour But

I have since learned that I was wrong. Mr. Parnell was a very close friend of Mr. Justin McCarthy in their early Parliamentary days; and several times they visited Longford — Mr. McCarthy's seat at that period—in company. On one of their trips, Mr. Parnell said that the first time he had ever even thought of politics, was when he learned from his mother that the police —in pursuit of persons who were not there and of arms which did not exist, searched the house at Avondale; and even insisted on penetrating into her bed-room. If he had been there, he said, he should have shot the policeman. But he was at Cambridge. This set him thinking, and reflection thus started, landed him in Nationalist opinions.

However, there were to be several years yet before he avowed or finally formed his opinions. The members of the Parnell family have led curiously isolated lives, though there has always been strong family affection, I believe, between them. The mother and the late Fanny Parnell, for instance, usually for many years lived in America; and mother and son only saw each other for one brief interval for nearly ten years. Similarly, there is a complete independence of political views. A younger brother of Mr. Parnell, who bears a close personal resemblance to his illustrious relative, and who also, I believe, lives in Brighton, is a strong Conservative; and has had his troubles with his tenants. In the early

days of Mr. Parnell, however, the rights of tenants were but imperfectly acknowledged or understood; and during the recent contest in Carlow, a letter was unearthed of ancient date, which described an eviction scene by Mr. Parnell's brother, at which Mr. Parnell seems to have himself assisted. It is quite certain, that if he had made up his mind that an eviction was the assertion of his just rights, that he would not have hesitated to have taken part in it; and that threats of danger would only have impelled him more obstinately to carry it out. One can well imagine the slim young man with the scornful proud face and the red-brown eyes, and the slight figure, going among the desperate peasants with his loaded revolver in his pocket, ready and almost eager for the perils of a life-and-death encounter. It was a curious circumstance that the man who was to do more than any other person to transform the whole land system of Ireland, to break down the power of the landlords, and to practically extinguish evictions, should have started his career as the second in command of an eviction party. It is also significant of the still immature state of his opinions on the Land Question, that his political opponents were able to reproduce against him a lease, which was passed after the Land Act of 1870, and which was like the documents of other landlords in compelling the tenant to contract himself out of

the benefits of the new act of relief. Mr. Parnell's affairs at this period were managed by a solicitor, who was a relative, and whose political opinions were different; and possibly he left such affairs to be managed without personal interference, for he was in some respects very careless, while in others very careful as to his personal affairs. But even if he had the direct responsibility for all these things, they must not be cast too harshly against him. His ideas were the ideas of all the class to which he belonged; and he was still a stripling of unformed opinions.

Finally, there is proof of the immaturity of his views in the fact that he joined the militia of his native county. A portrait is extant of him as an officer in one of the Wicklow rifles. A curious, and indeed saddening, portrait it is to look at now-a-days. The tall, slim, young man, with scarcely a trace of whisker, and with full round cheeks, gives no forecast of the stern face, worn by thought, and anxiety, and combat, which we have all known so well in recent years. The mouth is set; the eyes look at you straight, and must have struck the casual observer; but, on the whole, the figure cannot be said to be striking—it is the face of a typical young Englishman of the aristocratic classes: shy, common-place, *gauche*, proud, and undistinguished. But there is infinite pity in its hope of youth and in its freshness, when one thinks of the prematurely worn-out man whose

thin and haggard remains have just been returned to earth at what should be life's prime.

In Ireland, a militia officer is usually a member of the Unionist party; and probably Mr. Parnell then, at this time, had not yet made up his political mind. Finally, as to this period, I believe that for some years Mr. Parnell attended to his estate with great assiduity. Whatever may have been the record of his brother, his own, I believe, as a landlord, was perfect. He never evicted anybody; he attended to his estate; he was very popular. He was not usually a very active man physically—at least not for many years before his death; but he never was wholly idle. I have never known him to suffer from the low spirits which belong to the torpid dreamer. He always was interested in something, especially of a mechanical order. He had an idea —others have had it too—that there were great mineral resources in County Wicklow; and he spent a good deal of money in mining operations. He also established a mill for the manufacture of brushes; and in this way gave a good deal of employment. He also quarried, and supplied quarry-stone to the Corporation of Dublin. This one point finally about his career, at this period, it is necessary to mention. The moral character of Irish landlords used to be rather low. The omnipotence which they possessed over the homes and the fortunes of their tenantry, they often abused to the debauching of some unhappy girls. I believe

there were some enquiries of the priest on Mr. Parnell's estate when there was talk of his entering public life, and the priest assured the enquirer that he had never known anything whatever against the character of the young squire of Avondale. Mr. Parnell is reported to have declared, during the last nine months of hideous suffering and strife, that his life was rather purer than that of most men, and I believe the claim was just. It is certainly true that in conversation he never betrayed the least inclination to foulness of thought or language.

His association with America induced him to repeat, at an early age, the example of his father; and he went on a prolonged tour through that country. Two adventures happened to him on this tour. He and his brother, John—who is permanently settled as a resident in America, and is said to be the largest peach-grower in the world—met with a railway accident in Georgia. Charles escaped unhurt; but the elder brother was injured. "I never had so good a nurse in my life as Charlie," said John to me, ten years ago, in America.

I cannot say what was the precise date of another and even more important and fateful adventure. Like his father, he fell in love, during his tour, with one of the fascinating daughters of America. The scene, I believe, of this episode, was Newport—the fashionable resort of Rhode Island; and the lady was a native of that State. I should infer from an observation of Mr. Parnell—which I

shall presently give—that his suit was received favourably, and that for some time, at least, he was definitely engaged. But America is the paradise of woman, and the young and the attractive there usually have a large choice of admirers equally devoted. There was another aspirant to the hand of Mr. Parnell's love; and as he was a native of the State, it is possible that he had as his allies the doting parents, who hated to see their daughter carried away by a shy foreigner into the barbarous and remote region of Ireland. At all events, the lady married the other man. I was told the outline of the story when I was in Providence, Rhode Island, a few months ago. There the lady still lives; but with her—as with her former lover—the world of passion has not gone well. She has been for years separated from her husband, though not divorced.

It is vain to speculate on what might have been the fate of Mr. Parnell if this episode had ended differently. It is possible that as a husband and a father he might have been satisfied to lead the life of the country gentleman. His tastes were simple. He took a keen interest in his property and in its life. He was naturally easy-going, and he had—I have reason to believe—profound and passionate possibilities of domestic affection. I have often, too, heard him make the suggestion that marriage gave a distaste for political life. "It made a man," he said, "too comfortable."

The Newport episode certainly did not make him comfortable. "You know I was jilted," he said to a colleague in the one burst of confidence which his history records. The curtain falls at this point, and all beyond is darkness. All Parnell's feelings were deep, and he felt the disappointment keenly. I judge this to be the case also from the fact that I heard his brother John allude to the event—not bitterly, for his nature is too gentle to be bitter, but with a certain amused resentment, many years after it all happened.

There, at all events, it was, and this was perhaps the private episode that lay down in the depths of this quiet young man when he turned his face to the shabby offices in which the then weak, poverty-stricken and unfashionable Irish cause was housed in Dublin city, with the humble prayer that he might be admitted to the rank and file of the gathering army.

CHAPTER II.

ENTRANCE INTO PUBLIC LIFE.

THE first impression which Mr. Parnell made on the men he proposed to join, was not, as will be gathered, particularly favourable. The General Election of 1874 had just been sprung upon the country by Mr. Gladstone. Everybody who has taken any part in political life knows the strange kind of ambitions that rise at such a period. The most unlikely men, the most arrant impostors, the most hopeless adventurers, for a brief season rise to the surface, and sit at the gates of those who have anything to do with the recommendation of candidates. In such periods men become extremely suspicious; and it was therefore not unnatural that there should have been some misgivings when a gentleman presented himself who stumbled in his speech, was somewhat shy in manner, and had that fatal and obtrusive English accent. It has not been an unknown experience of Irish politics that men of the landlord class have temporarily descended from their eminence into the popular

ranks in order thus to rise to power, and a portion of that vast Pactolian stream which floods Ireland from the English exchequer. However, Mr. Parnell seems to have been accepted, and he tried to stand for County Wicklow. But he was at the time High Sheriff; as such, was incapacitated from standing, and would not be allowed to resign. So that attempt failed. A few weeks later, however, he had the opportunity. The late Colonel Taylor had accepted office as Chancellor of the Duchy in the new Ministry of Mr. Disraeli, and sought re-election for County Dublin.

County Dublin was then a perfectly secure seat for the Tories, and the fight against them was a forlorn hope. But Parnell expressed his readiness to undertake the task, and the Home Rule League brought him before a public meeting for adoption. The late Mr. A. M. Sullivan, one of the very finest orators Ireland ever produced, proposed the motion in Mr. Parnell's favour. I have not beside me the journal that contains the report; but doubtless the speech of that matchless orator contained eloquent allusion to the great services of the historic family from which Mr. Parnell had sprung. This is the best sort of recommendation to an Irish audience. The men who resisted the Union are enshrined in the national book of heroes and apostles; and descent from one of them is a passport to con-

fidence and popular love. The resolution, then, in favour of Mr. Parnell was carried by acclamation. Then came the moment for him to acknowledge the resolution. However generous be the feelings of a public meeting, it does require some powers of speech from those who seek political position. Let Mr. A. M. Sullivan tell of what happened when the young recruit stood up to address the expectant and friendly crowd.

"To our dismay he broke down utterly. He faltered, he paused, went on, got confused, and, pale with intense but subdued nervous anxiety, caused everyone to feel deep sympathy for him. The audience saw it all, and cheered him kindly and heartily; but many on the platform shook their heads, sagely prophesying that if ever he got to Westminster, no matter how long he stayed there, he would either be a 'Silent Member' or be known as 'Single-speech Parnell.'"

He was, of course, ignominiously beaten in the fight for Dublin County; but soon afterwards John Martin, the Member for Meath, died, and Mr. Parnell was immediately selected as the Nationalist candidate. He was elected on the 19th of April, 1875; three days later, on April 22nd, he took his seat for the first time. By a singular coincidence this happened to be a historic night, destined to influence the whole future course of the Home Rule movement. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, who

was then Chief Secretary for Ireland, was proposing one of the Coercion Bills which, unfortunately, have been of such regular and periodic occurrence in the history of the Imperial Parliament since the Union. Mr. Butt was anxious to delay the Bill, and asked Mr. Biggar, who had entered Parliament in the previous year, to speak against time. Mr. Butt did not particularise the length of time which he required Mr. Biggar to speak, but that extremely self-willed and obstinate personality interpreted it to mean a speech as long as physical strength would hold out. I may mention that I was in the Strangers' Gallery for a considerable period through this same night. Mr. Brand was then Speaker of the House of Commons, and those were the days before the Reform in the Rules of Procedure was made or even dreamt of. Accordingly, a member was at liberty to speak on almost any subject and at any length, and the Chair was powerless to check or to stop him. Mr. Biggar was a peculiarly aggravating obstructive. Though he was a man of very strong common sense and usually very sound judgment, and had had, as a business man, a long experience of life, he was not a man of any reading, had very few ideas, and a vocabulary even scantier than that of Mr. Parnell. The result of it was, that in speaking against time, he wandered aimlessly and hopelessly from the particular Bill which he was discussing. I remember particularly being struck

with the fact that, in the course of the speech upon a measure to restrain the Constitutional Liberty of Ireland, he managed to get in a discussion on Ritualism, which he denounced as man-millinery. Mr. Brand did make one or two attempts to stop the flow of discursive and apparently endless speech. Mr. Biggar's voice became so exhausted that, at one time, he could scarcely be heard, and the Speaker thought that he could call him to order by representing that his observations no longer reached the Chair. Mr. Biggar, however, was equal to the situation. He had been speaking—or rather had been reading long extracts from Blue Books—from the seats below the gangway which are occupied by the Irish members. I quote from Hansard :—

"Mr. Biggar said that his non-observance of the rule was partly because he found it difficult to make his voice heard after speaking for so long a time, and partly because his position in the House made it very inconvenient for him to read his extracts directly towards the Chair; he would however, with permission, take a more favourable position.

"The hon. member accordingly, who had been speaking from below the gangway, removed to a bench nearer to the Speaker's chair, taking with him a large mass of papers, from which he continued to read long extracts, with comments.

"At length the hon. member said he was

unwilling to detain the House at further length, and would conclude by stating his conviction that he had proved to every impartial mind that the Government had made out no case for the maintenance of this monstrous system of coercion, and that their proposal was perfectly unreasonable. The hon. gentleman, who had been speaking nearly four hours, then moved his amendment."

There is only one fault to be found with this record : it gave the speech of Mr. Biggar credit for a duration of five minutes more than was actually the case. As a matter of fact, he had risen at five o'clock, and sat down at five minutes to nine.

A more important event than the speech of Mr. Biggar was the fact that it was heard by the silent, shy, unknown young man who had just entered the House of Commons for the first time. I did not see Mr. Parnell for some short time after this ; but I have heard that at this time he was very well dressed, and had the appearance of the ordinary, fashionable young man. He certainly was not thought much of. I remember distinctly hearing him mentioned a few months before by a well-known Irish journalist who was then on a visit to an old Dublin friend in London. "We had a frightful duffer as a candidate," was his description of Mr. Parnell. He was speaking within a few weeks after the unsuccessful contest for Dublin county.

It is one of the reproaches against Mr. Parnell

that he never originated an idea. The statement, as well as many others, may be true without derogating from the extraordinary place he is entitled to hold among the greatest leaders of men; for the more you state, and the more you exaggerate his intellectual deficiencies, the more you are compelled to admit the extraordinary force of his powers of command. It is certain, however, that the idea of obstruction did not originate in his own unaided mind. At this time, indeed, his political education was extraordinarily scanty. He was full of a fanaticism that was lethal, with wild aspirations, tameless passions. But they had not taken shape, and, above all things, they had not discovered anything of ways and means. I have heard O'Connor Power tell the story of an extraordinary project which Parnell imparted to him a short time after his entrance into Parliament. It was to come down to the House some night in fantastic costume, to provoke a collision with the Speaker, and by some such means to draw attention to the grievances of Ireland.

In the House of Commons at this period there was an Irish member whose name has by this time been swept along the swift current of oblivion in which all Parliamentary personalities, except of the very first order, are swept past us; but Joe Ronayne still survives in some faithful and grateful hearts. He had just been elected for the city

of Cork, as an old-time patriot who had never compromised with his principles in the long period between the death of O'Connell and the rise of Butt, during which all the political spirit of Ireland had been directed either into the selfish and dishonest pursuit of place and power, or into the wild and terrible experiences of revolutionary effort. Honest Joe Ronayne he used to be called. He was a very sincere, and a very serious, and also towards the end—from ill-health—a rather melancholy man. But, like many men of such a temperament, he was very witty. Just before his death, his leg had to be amputated. "I shan't," was his comment, "be able to comply with the Standing Orders of the House."

His was the mind in which the idea germinated, or rather revived—for it existed in the days of an earlier generation—the days of Gavan Duffy—that the Rules of the House of Commons exposed that assembly to successful attack. If only a few determined men were, he insisted, to take advantage of these rules, they could make the progress of all business impossible, and, in that way, bring the House of Commons either to a dead lock, or the surrender to the demands of the Irish party for a Parliament on College Green.

Mr. Ronayne, ill, dying, and without debating resource, was not the man to carry out such a policy, and, probably, he spoke of it to Parnell rather in an academic than a hopeful spirit. But

In Parnell and Biggar there were just the men to carry out such a policy. The remark has often been made that at first sight, at least, there were never two men less fitted for the stupendous task which these two set before themselves. Biggar had left school when he was young, having steadily refused to learn anything but arithmetic; he had spent all his life in the business of his father, a well-to-do pork dealer. When, a short time before this, he was asked to make a speech, he had made the candid reply that he could not speak a d——d bit. Similarly, Parnell was a man who hated speaking then, who hated it to his last day. He stammered and stuttered; never rose to the height of a fine phrase or a smoothly turned sentence.

But it was not eloquence or a sonorous vocabulary, or even a plenitude of ideas that was required for the work Parnell and Biggar now took in hand, and in the qualities which were really required, these two men were singularly rich. It must finally be remarked of the two that no men could be more different in appearance, manners, or training. Parnell was then tall, slim, handsome, and with the figure and face of a Greek statue; his whole manner was distinguished and lofty, and he was courteousness itself. Biggar was small, deformed, spoke with the hideous accent of Belfast, was rough, and most uncouth in manner; in short, was an exaggerated type of the atrocious

manners of the Belfast mercantile man. But, again, the two men were alike in the inflexibility of their will, in their absolute insensibility to the opinion of others, in their immutable obstinacy, in their tireless industry in anything that interested them, and in the narrowness of vision and hatred of opponents, without which fanaticism is rarely complete.

Everybody knows the plan of action which they adopted. They took a Bill brought in by the Government, and loaded the paper with pages of amendment, some rational and important, some absurd and trivial. All these amendments they discussed at full length. Sometimes, when they could not get anybody else to discuss with them, they discussed with each other. Mr. Biggar would rise to say that he did not agree with his hon. friend, or Mr. Parnell would suggest to his hon. friend that perhaps he could discuss the very important point he had raised on an amendment which stood in Mr. Parnell's own name a little lower down. Mr. Biggar would profess to have been convinced by the sound reasoning of his hon. friend; or, not being convinced, would find an opportunity for making another speech himself, or give an opportunity for another speech to Mr. Parnell. And so the comedy went on, played always with absolute control of countenance by the chief performers.

The situation became more amusing and

dramatic when, as often happened, Mr. Parnell and Mr. Biggar found themselves opposed to some minister, the pepperiness of whose temper would give them an opportunity of producing scenes and thereby prolonging debate. Their favourite victim was Mr. Gathorne Hardy, now Lord Cranbrook. Everybody who remembers that gentleman in the House of Commons, will know that he was a man of tempestuous temper and tempestuous speech. He was, at this time, Minister for War, and one of the Bills which the two Irishmen had attacked was the Mutiny Bill—the measure which every year has to be passed, to deal with the standing Army. Mr. Parnell had made the welcome discovery that in the discussion of this Bill, he could raise the question whether soldiers and sailors should be flogged. The chief object was to occupy time, and so derange the machinery of Parliament; but it was always well when a subject could be discovered which afforded ground for legitimate discussion and could attract public sympathy.

Mr. Gathorne Hardy would fret and fume, would snort out short and defiant speeches; would vituperate the offending Members; would declare that he had answered them several times already; swear that he would not answer them again; then sit for some hours in sullen silence; Mr. Parnell and Mr. Biggar, meantime, rising alternately and continuing their lengthy speeches. Then there would come another outburst from the irate

Minister—a deprecatory reply from Mr. Parnell; and then more speeches, and so on till the night wore out, and no progress was made with the Bill beyond a few lines of a single clause.

It was, however, characteristic at once of Parliamentary institutions, and of the dexterity of Mr. Parnell, that he should be able sometimes to obtain an extraordinary triumph for a policy which so exasperated and defied the whole House and the entire country. For instance: This question of flogging attracted the attention and evoked the sympathies of the Radical Members. They backed up the demands of Mr. Parnell, notably Mr. Chamberlain. Then there came a collision between Mr. Chamberlain and the Marquis of Hartington—who objected strongly, not only to the abolition of the lash, but to the adoption of any programme which had Parnell and Biggar for its sponsors and obstruction for its parent; but as Mr. Parnell forced Mr. Chamberlain, so in turn Mr. Chamberlain forced Lord Hartington, until in the end the abolition of flogging became the policy of the entire Liberal party. Meantime, withdrawn into the background, his work done, Mr. Parnell looked on with cynic amusement.

It is nearly half a generation since these scenes were enacted in the House of Commons; and already they are largely forgotten; but while they were going on, they were intensely exciting, and, sometimes, mad in their transports and delirious in their incidents.

The difficulties of Parnell and Biggar were greatly increased, and the hostility to them gained enormous strength from the fact that their policy and tactics were strongly condemned by the overwhelming majority of their own party, and most vehemently by their own leader. I have already sufficiently indicated Isaac Butt's character; and it will be understood how he—poor, good-natured, easy-going man—hated a system which brought the Irish party into fierce collision with everybody, and roused against it in England a destructive tempest of rage. One night—it was during a debate on the Prisons' Bill, which Mr. Cross had brought in—there were motions after motions for adjournment, with the result that the House was kept up to a dreadfully late hour, and there were scenes of fire and fury. Isaac Butt got up in the midst of the uproar, denounced his own colleagues amid the ringing cheers of the entire House, and declared that such tactics would reduce Irish politics to the level of a vulgar brawl. Parnell replied hotly but respectfully; and from this time forward a great deal of his energy had to be expended, not merely in fighting the enormously powerful enemy in front, but the enemy at the back, in the shape of his own leader and his own party.

It would be a waste of time just now to devote much space to a description of the obstructive period; it has long since departed into the realms

of history. But I shall have to give one or two examples by way of bringing home to the mind what the policy meant, and what it must have cost to Parnell.

Among the bills brought in during the session of 1877 was the ill-fated South African Bill, the measure which landed us in course of time in Majuba Hill and all the other hateful and ignominious incidents of the struggle with the Transvaal. Mr. Courtney was one of those who had the sense to oppose this bill. The attempt to enslave another race appealed, of course, strongly to Parnell; but it may be doubted whether sympathy with the Boers had as much to do with his strong opposition to the bill as his perception that it was a measure which would give many and abundant opportunities for impeding the business of the Government.

There were many wild scenes in consequence of the prolongation of the opposition, and in time the passion of the House had risen to an extreme pitch.

At last, on July 25th, the pent-up violence broke forth. Mr. Jenkins—"Ginx's Baby," as he was called, from the name of a successful work in his early manhood—had been one of those who had joined in opposition to the bill, and he was accused on this evening by Mr. Monk, a member of his own party, of having abused the rules of the House. "Mr. Jenkins rose to order, vehemently

denied the charge, and then moved that those words be taken down. Mr. Parnell at once rose. 'I second that motion,' he said; 'I think the limits of forbearance have been passed. I say that I think the limits of forbearance have been passed in regard to the language which hon. members opposite have thought proper to address to me and to those who act with me.' At once Sir Stafford Northcote, who was then Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House, rose and moved that the latter words of Mr. Parnell be taken down. The motion of Mr. Jenkins was irregularly got rid of by the intervention of the Chairman of Committees, Mr. Raikes, who declared that the words of Mr. Monk were not a breach of order. The Chairman, however, proceeded to raise another subject of dispute by calling upon Mr. Parnell to withdraw his statement, 'accusing hon. members of this House of intimidation.' 'The hon. member must withdraw that expression,' said Mr. Raikes, amidst the cheers and intense excitement of the House. Mr. Parnell rose to explain; he was constantly interrupted by 'conversation, coughs, exclamations, cries, and groans.' He denounced the Bill as mischievous both to the colonists and to the native races, and instituted a comparison between Ireland and the South African colonies; 'therefore,' he went on, 'as an Irishman, coming from a country which had experienced to its fullest extent the result of English interference

in its affairs, and the consequences of English cruelty and tyranny, he felt a special satisfaction in preventing and thwarting the intentions of the Government in respect to this Bill.

"The moment these words had been uttered, the House thought that it had at last caught the cool, wary, and dexterous Irish member in a moment of forgetfulness and passion, and that he had given the long-sought opportunity for bringing him to account. Amid loud shouts, Sir Stafford Northcote rose and moved that the words of Mr. Parnell be taken down; and this having been done, he proposed that all further business should be stopped, and that the Speaker should be sent for. The Speaker was brought in, the House filled with an excited crowd, and Sir Stafford Northcote moved that Mr. Parnell 'be suspended till Friday next.' Mr. Parnell was called upon to explain. While the House was storming around him, and he was brought face to face with the prospect of undergoing Parliamentary censure after a manner unprecedented, and thus viewed with horror by all the men around him, he began by a technical objection. He pointed out that another motion had been proposed to the House before that of Sir Stafford Northcote's, and that, therefore, the motion of the leader of the House was out of order. But the Speaker ruled this objection as untenable; and Mr. Parnell had to proceed with his own defence. He addressed to the House a speech full

of the boldest defiance and of stinging suggestion. The House was now beside itself with rage, and there were loud shouts that Mr. Parnell should withdraw, as is the custom when the conduct of a member is under consideration. Mr. Parnell left his seat and calmly proceeded to a place in the Speaker's Gallery, and from this point of vantage looked down on the proceedings in which he himself was the subject of debate.

"Sir Stafford Northcote now moved that 'Mr. Parnell having wilfully and persistently obstructed the public business, is guilty of contempt of the House, and that Mr. Parnell for his said offence be suspended from the service of the House till Friday next.' A fatal flaw was discovered in the proposal of Sir Stafford Northcote. Mr. Parnell had certainly declared his interest in 'thwarting and preventing the designs,' not of the House, which, of course, would be obstruction, but 'of the Government,' which is the object and the legitimate pursuit of every opponent of a Ministerial measure. Sir Stafford Northcote had evidently lost his head in his eagerness to throw a Christian to the lions, and he was obliged to postpone further debate upon the question until the following Friday. Mr. Parnell, escorted by Mr. Biggar, re-entered the House, stood up again, and resumed his speech exactly at the point at which he had been interrupted two hours before by the impulsive motion of Sir Stafford Northcote."

One scene more. The Ministry and the House had grown tired of the delay on the South African Bill; and at last it was resolved that the measure should be pushed through its last stage on the night of Tuesday, the 31st of July. It was on that night that the system of relays, which afterwards became so common, was first resorted to. The Ministerial forces had been divided into a number of groups, each of which was to remain about the House for a certain number of hours; and then to be relieved by the next group, and go home and get sleep. Parnell and Biggar had been informed of this arrangement. They cheerfully accepted the challenge. By this time, they had succeeded in getting the support of a few of their colleagues; but the supporters did not go beyond five; and seven was the entire Parnellite force. All night the battle raged. Mr. Courtney at first joined in the fray; but, after a while, his stern sense of Parliamentary decorum intervened, and he refused to push things to the extreme lengths to which Parnell and Biggar were prepared to resort. Parnell kept up the fight till eight in the morning—Biggar by his side—unless when he slipped into the Library to have a quiet sleep there. It was one of Biggar's peculiarities that he could sleep anywhere, and under almost any circumstances. He constantly went off into profound slumbers in his place in the House of Commons. There was one amusing instance of the

curious result of the habit. There was a proposal to increase the salary of one of the paid officials of the Land League of Great Britain.

Biggar had all an Ulsterman's fierce love of economy, and had resisted the motion on several occasions with great vehemence, and with that persistent doggedness of purpose which he displayed in small things quite as much as in great. This night, the proposal was to come on again; and everybody feared—although there was a majority in its favour—that it would be once more successfully resisted by the obstruction of Biggar. But just a moment or two before the motion came on, Biggar sitting erect on a small and uncomfortable chair, fell fast asleep, and when he woke, the motion had been carried.

I should also mention as a sign of the times, that on this and some other occasions, when Biggar at the time of the South African Bill, retired to get a little rest in the Library, some of the supporters of the Government managed to pass by, and to drop some heavy Blue Book as they passed. But the stratagem was futile; not all the thunders of Heaven and the great deeps could rouse Biggar when once he settled himself to sleep. Let me finish the account of the great fight over the South African Bill by saying that it was continued until two o'clock on the following day; and that throughout all the hours of the night, there sat a lonely and persistent figure in the

Ladies' Gallery: it was Fanny Parnell, who shared her brother's opinions; was like him in fanaticism and—as already said—like him in a sudden, premature and slightly mysterious death.

It was, I believe, on the afternoon of this day that I spoke to Mr. Parnell for the first time for any length of minutes. I had been introduced to him before, because we met as those already acquainted, but he had made no impression upon me; at least, the first meeting has certainly escaped my memory.

I do remember another evening with him which it is now pleasant to recollect; but I cannot say whether it preceded or followed the occasion to which I have just alluded. He took me down to the terrace of the House of Commons, talked to me for a long time about his policy of obstruction, and, with the regard for the ease of others which was then habitual to him, he insisted on sending for something to eat when he found that he had detained me beyond the usual hour for a meal. What a charming man he was in these days in appearance, in manners, above all, in self-estimate!

There is an impression that Mr. Parnell was a very reticent man in private. To this extent, the statement is true that he never, or very rarely, spoke of himself or of his own affairs. Most men often speak of their trials, their loves, or their digestions, to some people; but

Parnell was always silent as to Parnell in private. Nor was he ever even an approach to a good conversationalist. He had few ideas and little of the information that makes easy conversation; and of small talk he was absolutely incapable. But when he met anybody who could be interested in his ideas and who wanted to draw him out, he would speak quite as freely as anybody else. In the early days of obstruction, this was especially the case. He would talk of obstruction by the hour together. He paid a visit once to Mr. John O'Leary, who, as is known, had been one of the leaders of the Fenian and physical force movement. As such, he had no faith in Parliamentary agitation, and Parnell's tactics appeared to him tomfoolery, and his hopes entirely illusory; but Parnell spent several hours with him trying to convince him. He spoke, I have heard, incessantly for several hours, nobody interrupting. I can well imagine the scene In these days, Parnell used to speak in a dreamy monotone. He rarely looked at the person to whom he was speaking; but with those strange, uncanny red-brown eyes of his, gazed into space, and altogether gave one the impression of a man who was talking in a trance. Occasionally, he turned on you those eyes, and it was like the flash of bull's eyes suddenly cast on your face.

This was how he talked to me on that soft summer evening on the terrace. A lonely man he

appeared then to be—he lived, I believe, at that time in lodgings in Keppel Street, with occasional visits to the Westminster Palace Hotel, when the hours of the House were peculiarly late or prolonged. He gave to me the impression of one who had no home, no place to go to. The House was not sitting—it was, if I recollect, a Wednesday evening — and, therefore, there was no special reason why he should linger around Westminster, but he tarried there with the air of a man who had no other place to go to. He was never a member of a club, I believe, throughout his whole life. The theatre attracted him but little; he had no appetite for coarse pleasure, and the dreariness of lodgings doubtless depressed him. This awful loneliness of the life of the Irish Member, from which so many of his colleagues suffered bitterly—from which he must have suffered more than any of them, being so incapable of making acquaintances and of unbending—this central fact in his life must always be steadily borne in mind when one considers the terrible event which darkened and destroyed his life and ultimately brought it to an untimely end.

The cyclone of anger which Parnell's tactics produced in England, provoked, of course, quite the contrary effect in Ireland. In those days, the hatred of England burned fierce and strong, and Parnell appealed to that sentiment directly and eloquently. If one wants to understand the extraordinary influence which] Parnell exercised, if

one wants to understand why so many of his people were willing to imperil, perhaps to destroy, the chances of their country for liberty in obedience to his command, it is in the obstruction period one has to seek the cause; for what the Irish saw in Parnell was a man who was proud, fearless, haughtily indifferent to Parliamentary opinion, coldly scornful of English indignation. This was a reversal of the position and attitude of the two nations that to Ireland was fascinating and dazzling in its contrast to the facts of real life and to all previous experience. The strong nation was humbled by the weak, in the person of Parnell; the proud conqueror baffled; the scorn of the dominant race met with a scorn prouder, more daring and more deep. This entire change in the attitude of the two nations must always remain as the imperishable work of Parnell. It was a spirit in some respects evil, and at first decidedly malignant; but it was the spirit of self-confidence, pride and hope which Parnell thus inspired, that rendered possible the mighty movement and the splendid unity which have won for Ireland the vast gains of the last fifteen years. Parnell endeared himself—will ever endear himself—to the hearts of Irishmen as the first man who, for two generations, approached the proud and, as England then was, cruel and contemptuous conqueror, and compelled him to stand and listen—and obey.

Isaac Butt stood no chance in the struggle with such a portent as had now arisen; but at first he himself did not think so. One night the late J. A. Blake, who was afterwards a follower and a close friend of Mr. Parnell, saw the young Member ascend to one of the galleries to speak to an acquaintance. He was at once struck by his face.

"That young man will be the death of you," he said to Butt.

The Irish leader, then strong in the support of nearly all Ireland, laughed the idea to scorn. "Nonsense!" he replied; "I can drive him out of public life with a word."

But he soon found that he was mistaken. When Parnell and Biggar appeared in Dublin after some of the exciting scenes to which I have alluded, their reception was madly enthusiastic. The Irishmen in England were equally strong on Parnell's side; and, at last, towards the close of the year 1877, there came the opportunity for a struggle between the two men. Isaac Butt had occupied the position of President of the Home Rule Confederation, the organization in which the Irishmen in England were then united. In this, as in subsequent organizations, the officers are elected by an annual convention of delegates. The Convention of 1877 met at Liverpool. Isaac Butt attended; but he was told beforehand that Parnell would be elected in opposition, and the old man, who was gentle, weak, and hated strife, at once

yielded without a struggle. There were two other circumstances that must be mentioned in connection with this event: the Irish Member who proposed the deposition of Butt and the election of Parnell, was one of those who, thirteen years later, was to be active in bringing about the deposition of Mr. Parnell, and was actually reproached by Mr. Parnell for the previous exploit, to which, of course, Mr. Parnell had been a most willing assenter. And, finally, as the Irish in England were the first to choose Parnell's leadership, so they were the first to renounce it with unanimity. Fourteen years afterwards, there was another Convention of Irishmen, this time at Newcastle-on-Tyne; and they, with absolute unanimity, pronounced against the further leadership of Mr. Parnell.

I must conclude this chapter with a few words as to Isaac Butt and his relations to Mr. Parnell. Mr. Parnell was justified, as I believe, in his whole policy to Mr. Butt; but at a moment when the passionate friends of Mr. Parnell are blindly denouncing his opponents as his murderers, it may be well to recall the fact that Mr. Parnell undoubtedly helped to break poor Isaac Butt's heart, and to shorten his life. Unlike Mr. Parnell, he had a laborious profession to follow for bread, and was immersed in an unfathomable sea of debt. He had often to turn aside from laborious Parliamentary work to go into the law courts and earn the fee that drove away the dun and warded off

imprisonment for debt. It was proposed that the people for whom he drudged so slavishly and loved so well, should raise a subscription to meet his wants; but the subscription came at the time when he was carrying on his unequal fight with Parnell, and popular subscriptions depend as much as first theatrical performances on the uncertain mood of the public. Suffice it to say that the subscription was a failure. Butt gradually retired from politics, went back to his briefs and the law courts, wearily anticipating the end of life. He suffered from weakness of the heart's action—it was from the same weakness that his rival also died. With that dash of poetry and picturesqueness which was in his nature, he said to a medical friend, "The curfew has tolled, and the lights will soon be out."

He made his last appearance in defence of his policy at Molesworth Hall, in Dublin. He was at the same time engaged in the celebrated will case of Bagot *v.* Bagot. The appearance of the old man at this meeting has left a deep and sad impression on the minds of all those who were present. When he came in, the look of death was on his face—the death of his hopes and his spirits had already come. There were many faces among those around that once had lighted at his look, and that now turned away in estrangement. "Won't you speak to me?" he said, in trembling tones to one man who had been his associate in many fights and amid many stirring scenes. But his old persuasive

eloquence was still as fresh as ever, and he defended his whole policy with a vigour, plausibility, and closeness of reasoning that were worthy of his best days. This was the last meeting he ever attended. The next day he fell ill. The heart had at last refused to do its work; the brain could no longer be supplied; he lingered for nearly a month with his great intellect obscured, and on May 5, 1879, he died.

The manner of Mr. Parnell to Isaac Butt had always been courteous. Mr. Parnell was always in externals a courteous man. Some of the stories of his want of courtesy, which have appeared in the newspapers since his death—I will allude to them more particularly later on—are not only untrue, but grotesquely unlike him or anything he could ever be. But there is no doubt that at this period of his life the deep layer of hardness which was in Parnell's nature, was harder than ever, from the fanaticism which possessed him, and from the pride of life and strength and achievement. I heard a friend of Butt complain, at the time of the struggle, that Parnell always wore a quiet smile while Butt was speaking at the private meetings of the Irish Party—then held in dingy rooms in King Street, Westminster — which to him at least appeared insulting. Certain it is that Parnell thought that Butt's day of usefulness to Ireland had passed—in which he was right; and he did not regret his death. It was from Mr. Parnell's

own lips, in the lobby of the House of Commons, that I heard some of the details of Isaac Butt's death. I confess that Parnell seemed to tell the tragic story of the dark and sad end of a once great Irishman with a frigidity that chilled and almost shocked me.

CHAPTER III.

LEADER.

THE death of Mr. Butt did not immediately give the leadership to Mr. Parnell. The party of which Butt had been leader, was composed of a very heterogeneous and, for the most part, extremely unworthy element. Of all members of the party there was not one who least represented its spirit, and to whom it was more antagonistic than Mr. Parnell, and probably if he had been proposed, there would not have been half-a-dozen men ready to support his nomination as leader. Nor had he, up to this, attained to the position of vast influence among the people generally. Even those who trusted him were not at all certain that he had in him those graver and more stable elements which go to make the safe leader of a great party. To those who know the frigid and self-possessed Parnell of many years, it is curious now to remember that the first impression he made was that of a very excitable, a very violent, and very extreme man. His first speeches in the House were also

delivered with the violence almost of a scream. Here are two extracts from Mr. Lucy, written in 1876, and Mr. Lucy, as is known, is an acute and experienced observer of the House of Commons :—

"Mr. Parnell," wrote Mr. Lucy in the *World* (March 29, 1876), "is always at a white heat of rage, and makes, with savage earnestness, fancifully ridiculous statements, such as you may hear from your partner in the quadrille, if you have the good fortune to be a guest at the annual ball at Colney Hatch. The writer," he added, "who cherishes a real affection for Ireland, and who has an unaffected admiration for the genius of her sons, bitterly reproaches Meath that it should have wronged Ireland by making such scenes possible under the eye of the House." And, finally, the sapient writer said (same date), "Mr. Biggar, though occasionally endurable, is invariably grotesque. . . But Mr. Parnell has no redeeming qualities, unless we regard it as an advantage to have in the House a man who unites in his own person all the childish unreasonableness, all the ill-regulated suspicion, and all the childish credulity of the Irish peasant, without any of the humour, the courtliness, or dash of the Irish gentleman."

This, of course, was not the estimate of Mr. Parnell's admirers, but at the same time, even his best friends had not made up their minds that he

was anything more than a very resolute, and a very brave leader of guerillas.

Nor was the state of things in Ireland at this period such as to make his leadership possible. The Franchise had not been reduced either in town or country, and the seats were mostly in the hands of that shopkeeper's vote, which in every country is proverbially time-serving and uncertain. In 1878, the period at which I have now arrived, it is quite probable that in some seats, at least, with a very small electorate, Mr. Parnell would not have been returned as member. However, a movement was coming which was destined to put a final seal on his supremacy. The potato crop was, up to a few years ago, the sole reliance of the Irish peasant, the one thin partition that stood between him and wholesale starvation. The potato crop of 1877 was small, so was that of 1878, and finally in 1879, it descended to an almost lower point than any it had reached since the terrible days of the great famine of 1846.

Mr. James Lowther—whose Conservatism is too narrow even for the existing administration—was then Chief Secretary of Ireland, and to all proposals for improving this state of things, he gave the obstinate negative of strong, narrow, and immutable conviction.

At the same time Mr. Michael Davitt, who had recently been released from prison, after many years of penal servitude, had succeeded in inducing

a large number of the physical force party, with which he had formerly been associated, to give the constitutional movement at least a chance.

The extraordinary success of Mr. Parnell in defying the House of Commons, and in forcing upon it attention to the Irish question, had raised the hope, as yet dim and vague, that, after all, the liberation of Ireland could be obtained on the floor of the House of Commons. Furthermore, the state of desperation to which the tenants were falling, not only because of the loss of the crop, but because of the vast increase of evictions by the landlords, imperatively called, and, even without leaders, was certain to produce a strong agitation.

Brooding over the land question in prison, Mr. Davitt had arrived at conclusions far in advance of even the most progressive Nationalist of the time. At that period, the high-water mark of agrarian reform in Ireland, the most the peasants demanded was what came to be known as the three F's—Fair Rent, Free Sale, and Fixity of Tenure; and even these reforms were considered vastly beyond anything that the Imperial Parliament was ever likely to bestow. Mr. Parnell himself had certainly not got beyond this point, and his whole inclination was to adhere to that programme as the only one that had the least practical chance of being successful; in no sense of the word a visionary, always anxious to adopt ways and means to ends, his whole

policy summed up in the prosaic and characteristic phrase, "The proof of the pudding is in the eating" —he probably thought that any wider demand than this would be sure of ending in disastrous failure.

Mr. Davitt, on the other hand, thrown back upon himself in the solitude of prison life, and deeply affected by the study of the hideous inequalities of society which beget prisoners and prisons, had arrived at a gospel which contemplated nothing less than the reversal of the whole social fabric. He was not satisfied even with what is called peasant proprietary; but then, and certainly since, has preached the more advanced theory of nationalisation of the land. However, some of the men whom Mr. Davitt had met in America, during a lecturing tour there, had advocated the doctrine of peasant proprietary, and peasant proprietary was the programme which was adopted by most of the land agitators.

It was a long time before Mr. Parnell finally accepted the abandonment of the old platform of the three F's, which had been the consistent demand of land reformers for nearly half a century, and it is possible that, but for Mr. Davitt, he never would have advanced that far. In 1879, things had reached such a point in Ireland that the agitation could no longer be kept back, and at Westport, on June 8 of that year, Mr. Parnell, for the first time, addressed a large public meeting in connection with the new demands. In the railway carriage going to this meeting, he

was reflecting on the tenacity of his friend and colleague, Mr. Biggar, in the House of Commons, and it was these reflections that produced the historic phrase which did so much to produce subsequent events. Asking the people what they were to do to stay the hand of eviction, he answered his own question in these words: "You must show the landlords that you intend to hold a firm grip on your homesteads and land." The phrase was afterwards slightly modified and considerably shortened; it passed into popular phraseology as "keep a firm grip," and it was the motto of one of the most widespread and most successful of modern agitations.

This accession of Mr. Parnell to the land movement had equally important consequences for himself and for that movement. Up to this moment his position had been purely Parliamentary. His courage and obstinacy, the fierce scenes which had illuminated the struggle in Parliament, had lifted him high before the gaze of the Irish people. At this moment he for the first time came into contact with the vast popular force that dwelt in the tenant farms of the country, and this force made him a most potent personality.

On the other hand, the land movement, without such a leader, would never have reached its subsequent gigantic proportions. Mr. Shaw, quiet, cautious, and moderate, a man of business and of

middle age, would never have consented to suggest or direct the stormy outbursts which were inevitable if the movement was to reach the fever and proportions of that revolutionary passion which is required to work revolutionary changes. Most of the other members of Parliament were without name and without reputation; but this young descendant of a historic house, associated with the old glories and the historic struggles for Irish liberties in the past, this successful antagonist of all the mighty forces of the Empire in the Imperial Parliament—here was a figure that lent dignity and force to a great movement.

The land movement beginning in Mayo now sowed its seeds in the fertile ground of universal poverty, wholesale eviction, and mixture at once of hatred for the landlords and desperate resolve to resist them if possible. It was finally determined that an organization should be started for the purpose of directing the movement; and thus it came that in September, 1879, a small meeting started the great organization, afterwards known as the Land League. Mr. Andrew Kettle, Mr. Parnell's candidate in the recent struggle at Carlow, was in the chair. Mr. Patrick Egan, who is now American Minister to Chili, was one of the persons appointed treasurer. Mr. Biggar was the other. Further, it was resolved that an appeal be made to America, and Mr. Parnell was appointed as the delegate of the

organization to make the appeal, and Mr. John Dillon was asked to be his companion.

This trip to America was destined to colour the whole future of Parnell and of Ireland. Up to this time there had really never been any assistance to Constitutional movements in Ireland from that quarter. America had supplied money for men and arms for the Fenian party; had occasionally sent vast sums to bishops and priests for the relief of the distress that was then periodic; and every Christmas had transmitted welcome remittances to parents and relatives, which mostly went to pay the rent. But it had never occurred to any Irish leader even to ask for money for a Constitutional movement; and so strong was the apprehension that any such appeal would be futile, that even Mr. Parnell did not put his demand in that shape. He asked for money to meet distress and to support an extra-Parliamentary agitation; he asked none for Parliamentary purposes.

The story of his American trip has often been told—usually with gross misrepresentation and complete misunderstanding of its purpose and operations. There was one account of it which excited universal attention; for it was given under circumstance of exceptionally dramatic surroundings. Among the witnesses for the *Times* in the Forgeries Commission, was a man who, for upwards of twenty years, had been the paid spy of the British authorities, and all that time had

succeeded in passing himself off as one of the sincere and bold and relentless members of the revolutionary party in America. This strange and sinister figure gave an account of the revolutionary organizations of America. For the first time that vast subterranean life of the Irish was laid bare to the public, with its fierce men, its wild passions, its delusive hopes, its powerful organization, its dread weapons.

Then for the first time people came to really measure the awful difficulties of Parnell's life, and the greatness of the genius and the massive strength, the cold courage, the unfailing nerve and adroitness with which he had passed over those hot ploughshares — those volcanic abysses.

Mr. Asquith, one of Parnell's counsel, when he saw slowly unfolded from the lips of the great spy that vista of fiery faces through which Parnell had passed—cold, self-possessed, scathless—declared that Parnell was as great a statesman as Bismarck; and other observers were equally enthusiastic.

It is assumed that Parnell could not have succeeded with those fierce and desperate revolutionaries without the weapons of deceit; but the charge is not true. Though he was dexterous, adroit, and sometimes not in the least scrupulous, my deliberate and ultimate judgment of Mr. Parnell is that he was by nature

frank though not expansive; and that he was not in the habit of making false representations of his inner thoughts. What he probably said to those men was that he might be wrong in thinking that the liberties of Ireland could be won by Parliamentary agitation, and that they might be right in thinking that physical force was the only means. I don't mean to say that he ever had any doubt—at least, not after a year or so of Parliamentary experience—that a physical force movement was hopeless. He discussed the question with me some years before I entered Parliament, and he then declared that in his opinion a physical force movement was hopeless; but he was anxious that Ireland should have her rights. He cordially, steadily, hated the government of Ireland by Dublin Castle. I don't think he ever got to like the English people much, and if other men chose to hope and to risk everything for the emancipation of Ireland, he could not say them nay.

Putting the case thus fairly—his case and that of the revolutionaries—he asked that they should give him a fair chance of testing his policy. It is certain that he never made himself the creature—as has been represented—of the revolutionary party. On the contrary, he came to pretty sharp collision with some of their leaders during this same trip, because he refused to be dominated by them. But he did succeed in getting that fair chance which he asked, and raised nearly

seventy thousand pounds in the course of his tour.

When he went to America, he found the task there before him much heavier than he expected, and the welcome much wider, more enthusiastic, and more fruitful. Never a good man at business, incapable of keeping accounts, and averse to writing letters, he sank into an abyss of anarchic confusion; and it was then that he applied for assistance to a young lad who was destined to play a momentous part in his subsequent history.

Tim Healy was born in the town of Bantry, in the midst of the places where the dread famine of 1846, with its million of corpses, had raged with peculiar severity. Subsequent evictions, emigration, hopeless war with poverty, had reduced villages all round from noisy and bustling fishing centres to silent and deserted and poverty-stricken spots. He had gone, after a brief education, to earn his own living, when he was still little more than a child, and began as a clerk with a few shillings a week, in the office of Maurice Brooks, afterwards one of his colleagues in Parliament. Then he went to Newcastle-on-Tyne—a town with a large Irish population. In the days of long ago, when Tim was a shorthand clerk there, the relations between the English and the Irish were far from friendly, and the young lad, proud, shy, brooding, full of a fierce sense of the wrongs of his country, and internally ablaze with all the fervid

and despairing fury of the children of a land at once hopeless and oppressed,—loved his own people with passion and hated the English enemy —as he thought then—with a vehement hatred. He sat laughing and joking and romping with children, so long as he remained inside the wall of the Irish family with whom he had his home; but when the door opened, a frown settled on his forehead, and never left it until he returned once again to that small portion of Ireland and the Irishry among whom he dwelt.

I remember Tim at that period, not very different in many respects from the Tim Healy of to-day. To-day his figure is slight and boyish, and though it is a little subdued, there blazes forth now and then the same Corsican fire from his large brown eyes. His hair is a little greyer, and there are lines in the face that was smooth when first I saw it. At this period, he was short-hand secretary in the office of a relative. Another relative was editor of the *Nation* newspaper, and Tim became the London correspondent. He made the acquaintance of Mr. Parnell very shortly after that gentleman's entrance into Parliament, and his spirit, fierce, violent and bold as Parnell's own, was at once swept away by the policy that defied, exasperated and maddened the English enemy, and then Tim, who was a hero-worshipper, was entranced by Parnell's fascinating personality. Curious as it may seem, Parnell

retained his fascination for Healy to a certain extent even unto the end. Months after the quarrel had broken out, I heard him speak with something like awe of the hypnotic influence which Parnell could exercise over people—himself included. I am certain that though his sense of what was rational and patriotic would have ranged Healy on the opposite side to Parnell in the last sad controversy, he would have remained always the affectionate, if not worshipping friend of Parnell to the end, if Parnell had only let him.

At the period of which I speak, however, the friendship of the two men was young, fresh and, at least on Healy's side, enthusiastic. Parnell then had no organ in the press; and the *Freeman's Journal*, controlled by a man of extraordinary judgment and powers—the late Edmund Dwyer Gray—saw in him only a reckless and narrow, and perhaps semi-insane fanatic. It was Healy that first helped to get access through journalism to the mind of Ireland. In the columns of the *Nation*, Healy wrote up Parnell and obstruction, week after week, with that bright, fiery, corrosive wit which we now all know; and the *Nation* newspaper was Parnell's first organ and Tim Healy his first spokesman in the press.

In his despair, Mr. Parnell thought of this bright, enthusiastic, capable and perfectly tireless young man, and he sent a cable for Healy. Healy obeyed with a promptitude that is

characteristic of his alertness of nature. The very evening of the day when the cable arrived, he was on his way to Queenstown ; and in little more than a week he was by Parnell's side, reducing chaos to order, arranging meetings, warding off bores, writing scores of letters every day, and in the swinging and rolling carriages on interminable railway journeys. If ever man faithfully served another, Tim Healy was the faithful servant of Mr. Parnell. However, the thousand and one unseen emotions and tendencies of our nature, which make us sympathetic or hateful to each other, are unaccountable things ; and it is certain that though Healy loved Parnell, Parnell never much cared for Healy ; and was always unjust and childishly inaccurate in his judgment of him. Suffice it for the moment to say that the tour of Parnell was extraordinarily successful ; that he addressed vast gatherings everywhere ; and that his triumphs reached their climax in his admission to speak in the House of Representatives, a favour extended but twice before in American history, and probably never to be conferred again.

Parnell was a glorious creature in these days. There was no labour from which he shrank. Often he had to travel night and day for two days together, and then to go off to a crowded hall to deliver, with his poor vocabulary and stumbling and unpractised tongue and hideous nervousness, a speech to enthusiastic crowds, who, he knew,

expected from him a very different kind of thing; the world had not yet been taught that a nation of orators could be governed by an inarticulate leader. Nor did he stop at speaking. Modest, hating publicity, he yet conducted his programme in the spirit of a showman, and with an ability that might have made Barnum envious. He knew that one of the inducements which brought together large crowds and large subscriptions—and the latter was what he cared for—was curiosity to see himself; and, accordingly, he nearly always managed to evade the public procession through the streets which Americans so dearly love, simply because it would satisfy sufficient curiosity to keep a certain number of people away. When the speeches were over, he took his own hat, and went round among the audience to collect money. I wish to insist again and again on the fact that Parnell was originally a man of excessive modesty and constant self-depreciation. John Dillon has become, by this time, one of the most effective debaters in the House of Commons, but he was almost as bad a speaker as Mr. Parnell in those far-off days. Parnell's account to me of his operations was in these words: "When John Dillon and I had sufficiently *depressed* the meeting, we went round with our hats and collected money."

I may also, even in the midst of this sombre narrative, tell a humorous incident of this tour.

At Jersey City Parnell and Dillon were very hospitably received, and among their hosts was the Governor, a sympathetic and kindly gentleman. The Governor had done full justice to the hospitality of his state, and, towards the evening, embracing Dillon, said, "Ah! Dillon; when I looked at Parnell, I said to myself, 'That fellow is an aristocrat; he doesn't know what starvation is.' But when I looked at you, I said, 'If ever I saw a poor fellow in whose face hunger is written in legible letters, it is poor Dillon.'"

In the midst of this tour, Lord Beaconsfield wrote the famous letter to the Duke of Marlborough, which was to be the campaign document of the general election. Parnell at once hurried home by the very first boat, and with a promptitude that was then characteristic of all his movements. But he could not get home in sufficient time to make adequate preparations for the election, and he met with another obstacle which, when I speak of it, will almost appear incredible, and which, properly understood, will throw a vast flood of light on the work Parnell did, and the difficulties of doing it. The men who had obtained control of the Land League movement were among the most earnest, honest and bold spirits of the county, and in this period, on the other hand, the vast majority of the Irish Members in the Imperial Parliament were loathsome, needy, self-seeking place-hunters. The people and the Parliamentary

representation were in the transition stage—the representation towards the purification from corruption; the earnest and the honest and bold from loss of all faith, to a complete confidence in Parliamentary agitation. For the moment, Parliamentary agitation was still distrusted, and a resolution had been passed that none of the funds of the Land League should be spent on Parliamentary elections. And thus, this strange state of things came to pass: that the man who had raised seventy thousand pounds in America, whom the Irish people there had accepted enthusiastically and unanimously as the leader of a great Parliamentary and Constitutional agitation—and who was advancing rapidly to the same place in the hearts and confidence of the Irish people at home—this man with the opportunity of making a great, honest, and irresistible Parliamentary party, was left with one thousand two hundred and fifty pounds to fight all the constituencies. Even this small sum did not come from the vast coffers of the League which he had thus filled to overflowing. One thousand pounds were a personal loan; one hundred pounds came from Liverpool, and a hundred and fifty pounds were obtained from the Tories in Cork by a stratagem which owed its invention and successful carrying out to the fertile brain of Tim Healy.

Thus it came to pass that the new party contained some of the worst elements of the old; that for

want of money and candidates Parnell had to submit to the election of place-hunters, with extorted promises against office-seeking, which they meant to break, and he knew they meant to break; and that in other places he had to let the elections go entirely by default. In some constituencies, too, there was the old quarrel between the moderate elements not prepared for the new transition, and the new and wilder forces that seemed to be coming into power. In some constituencies the fight between the candidate of Parnell and the candidate of the priests, was quite as formidable and fierce as that in Kilkenny or Sligo. At Enniscorthy, in particular, there was a fierce collision. Parnell had selected Mr. Garret Byrne as his second candidate, and the priests still stood by the O'Clery. Between the O'Clery and Mr. Parnell there had grown up fierce feeling in the first days of obstruction—O'Clery being one of Butt's adherents. Curiously enough the O'Clery was also popular with the revolutionary element; and thus there was a most formidable combination in his favour. A meeting had been called for Enniscorthy against the O'Clery, and Parnell attended. A mob, savage, drunken, and armed with blackthorn sticks—possibly with deadlier weapons—had been brought together to confront Parnell. They surged around the platform, swept away in a few moments the supporters of Parnell, and stood opposite him, with faces savage with passion, brandishing blackthorns

—threatening him with vengeance. Parnell was never greater than at that moment. He faced the awful mob with perfect courage ; was not moved from his path by shouts, interruptions, or insults, and, I have heard, attempted blows, and the suggestion of even more violent and deadly attacks. He was asked to withdraw his candidate—once, twice, a hundred times. Coldly, calmly, persistently, he refused ; by not one-hundredth part of an inch did he yield his ground. A scene such as this was enough to disgust even a man whom it did not intimidate ; but if it disgusted Parnell he didn't show it. I asked Tim Healy how he looked and acted the evening after this odious day. "Like a man of bronze," was the reply.

The general election, if it did not give Parnell a solid and great party, was an enormous personal triumph. He was elected for Meath, then he stood for Mayo and was elected there, and finally he stood for Cork city. The last was the most difficult enterprise of all. The electorate was largely composed of the moderate and well-to-do classes, who always oppose the revolutionary ; and the revolutionaries, on the other hand, might have had no love for a man who taught the hateful, and as they thought, misleading gospel of Constitutional agitation. But there was something in this dare-devil man, with glistening eye and the scornful mouth, the pallid complexion, the frame lithe as a panther's, that spoke of a courage so cool as to

win the hearts of the violent everywhere by the suggestion of a spirit akin to their own. At all events, after a fierce contest, Parnell was returned amid a scene of the wildest enthusiasm and contrary to general expectation. I have been told that in the exultation of the triumph, men embraced each other after continental fashion, or burst into floods of hysterical tears.

It was not long before there came the sign of the inevitable chasm between the new Irish party, composed of materials so heterogeneous and hostile.

The moderate men wanted Mr. Shaw, the more extreme wanted Mr. Parnell; and the country behind them was not yet so united as to compel the surrender of the moderate to the extreme. The two sections began by meetings which some of each refused to attend; but at last, on May 17th, 1880, the meeting came together in the City Hall, Dublin, and the election of Leader was the first business. Fortunately for Mr. Parnell and for Ireland, the attendance of the moderates was rather small. There was no expectation, at first, that Parnell would have been elected, nor did he himself take any step to procure his election. It was a peculiarity of this man—up to the last nine months of his life—that he shrank with lofty pride from ever saying or doing anything on his own behalf. Everything that he obtained came to him as the free gift of others: it was the tribute to

what Mr. William O'Brien has often called his divine right of genius to govern. But the night before the meeting in the City Hall, several of the newly elected members met in the Imperial Hotel in O'Connell Street—then, and since, a great Nationalist rendezvous. Tim Healy had not yet been elected a member of Parliament; but he also was present; so was James O'Kelly; so was Mr. Biggar; so was I. Tim Healy urgently advocated the leadership of Parnell; and, undoubtedly, his infectious vehemence had much to do with the resolve then and there made for the first time, to propose Parnell. Justin McCarthy, who was in another hotel, was of the same mind when he was consulted next day. Parnell was not seen until he was on his way from Morrison's Hotel to the City Hall. He was absent at an election, trying to defeat a Gladstonian, on the previous day. He smiled; neither assenting to nor dissenting from the suggestion. Even while we discussed the matter in the hall, the result was doubtful. Parnell had a list before him, which he showed to me; and in this list there were so many men whose whole personality was unknown to Mr. Parnell and to the rest of their colleagues, that their vote could not be forecast; and, accordingly, the vote might go anyhow—for Shaw, or Parnell, or someone else. Parnell's own view was that Mr. Justin McCarthy should be accepted as a compromise between him and Mr. Shaw. However, the suggestion was not

acted upon; and, after several speeches, the vote at last came.

The fateful nature of the struggle was fully felt by the men who had to vote. Where might this election lead? If Mr. Shaw were chosen, the path was sufficiently smooth and broad; there would be safe leadership—with Mr. Parnell in the irresponsible position of the guerilla leader, whom other men could follow or not as they chose. But if Parnell were elected—that vehement, fanatical, daring man—who seemed to fear nothing, and, to some extent, to know nothing—where might men find themselves landed? For, dimly perceptible at the end of every Irish struggle, there used to lurk all the worst possibilities of tragedy—imprisonment, penal servitude, the scaffold; or the age of poverty and despair in which so many Irish politicians have died. There were some men who knew the meaning of their choice, and made it, expecting and ready to encounter these things; but, at the same time, with that internal shock that comes to every Irishman when he accepts what William O'Brien has picturesquely called "The Banshee's kiss." Others there were of a very different type. Entering Parliament on the crest of a great popular wave, they uttered the popular shibboleth; comfortably determined, meantime, in their secret hearts, to pass in due course along the primrose path that leads the Irish traitor to place and fortune.

So the conflicting emotions were written on the faces of the men as they voted; the strivings in the dark depths of their souls found involuntary echoes in the weak, thin, and quiet voice in which they uttered the words Shaw or Parnell. Many men turned pale; few spoke much above a whisper. There was one man whom I saw then for the first time, and whose demeanour particularly attracted my attention. Slightly overdressed, laughing, with the indescribable air of the man whom life had made somewhat cynical, he was in sharp contrast with the rugged, plainly-dressed, serious figures around him. If appearances were not deceptive, he bore the unmistakable marks of the Whig. Nobody knew him—except, perhaps, his colleague, the O'Gorman Mahon. Mr. Parnell seemed never to have seen him before. When the time came for his vote, his face grew pale; and, to everybody's surprise, his voice was for Parnell. It was Captain O'Shea.

It was not the decisive, but it was not an unnecessary vote. The numbers were—for Parnell, 23; for Shaw, 18. The late Edmund Dwyer Gray was then Lord Mayor of Dublin, and as such sat in the civic chair until the election was decided. If I remember rightly, there was a brief adjournment after the election. When we returned, Mr. Gray had left the chair. With some hesitation, very slowly, and with a certain deprecatory look on his face, Parnell went into the chair. There

was, perhaps, a slight glitter in his eye; but the general expression was undoubtedly that of shyness. And so Parnell presided for the first time as leader over the Irish party. And last Sunday, eleven years afterwards, he lay in the same hall—brought thither in the very flower of manhood by the fatal gift which that day of election had bestowed on him.

CHAPTER IV.

THE UNSELFISH PATRIOT.

THE period which immediately followed Parnell's election as leader was almost as great as those early and terrible years in which, standing almost alone, he had defied the whole Imperial Parliament and the dreadful and cruel might of the British nation. But they were in some respects not altogether as great: he no longer stood absolutely alone, and he left a good deal of the work to others which formerly he did entirely himself. But he was most assiduous in his attendance in Parliament. Somebody asked him once how it was that he had not seen him on a particular night. With some temper, he replied that he could always be seen in the House of Commons, and that once he entered there, he never left the building until the House rose. But he did not—at least, that is my recollection now—show much leadership. There were two causes for this: his party was small and not closely knit together; and he had not yet taken himself seriously as a leader.

I shall have to note presently the terrible change that began to come over him, and that, in time, seemed to completely transform, and, indeed, lower his character. But at the period of which I speak, there was no man more simple, less pretentious, humbler in his estimate of himself, more generous in his estimate of others. His modesty was really amusing, and, at the same time, very fascinating. He used to say that the brains of his family were given to the women and not to the men. I remember one night as I left him at the Westminster Palace Hotel—which, on account of its proximity to the House of Commons, became his usual residence in 1880—that he said he had reached his tether, and would never get any further. Another instance of his modesty was this: While he was in America, he had been asked by the editor of a magazine to write an article on the Irish land question. Rushed about from place to place, with every second occupied by the meeting, the deputation, the interviewer, or one of the journeys peculiar to America in their length, he never had the time to comply with the request; and, indeed, it is doubtful if he would have done so even if he had the time. He could write a good letter, as pellucid as his speeches and his thoughts—which, within a narrow compass, were absolutely clear; he could write a manifesto, as that showed which was the worst blunder and offence of the last days of his struggles, and

yet will remain a masterpiece of terse statement and of fierce strength. But he did not like writing; was an execrable correspondent; and many of the documents which bore his name in those days were really the emanations of the quick, tireless, and brilliant pen of his secretary. However, it was desirable that the article should be written, and Miss Fanny Parnell, who, as I have already said, did have the literary gift, did the work. But, of course, her brother's name was attached; and, as his production, it was seriously discussed in the journals of the whole world. He saw the article for the first time when he went on board the ship on his way back to Ireland for the general election. To Tim Healy, he whispered several times, in fright, "They'll all know it isn't mine; it is too good."

In these days, too, he was the least jealous of men and the most loyal of colleagues. Every man got his chance: if somebody else would speak for him, he was only too delighted; and if the cheers and success which were thus gained disturbed him, he certainly did not show it. I cannot believe, even after some unworthy exhibition of later years, that he felt it. I remember his saying a remarkable thing as we drove together along the quays that lead to the Four Courts in Dublin. It was at the time of the State Trial, of which I shall have to speak presently. I said something to him in praise of this feature in his character as leader—

his readiness to let every other man do the best work he could. "I have always been anxious that the work should be done," he replied, accepting the compliment, "and have been only too glad to see others ready to do it."

It was also characteristic of him that he was the most pleasant of travelling companions, and travel, as most people know, is a test of character. I have told the story of the curious scene in the hotel in Monaghan between him and me. We had come that day from Omagh, the capital town of County Tyrone, and had left that place, baffled in our attempt to beat the Gladstone candidate, without a friend to cheer us, amid a dreadful downpour of rain. Nor had our evening in Monaghan been much more satisfactory. One of the sitting Members was about—it was reported—to take a Government situation, and we wanted to have a chance of running one of our party as the candidate. This was long before the reduction of the Franchise, and although Monaghan was always considered a favourable county for the National cause, it had not yet advanced further than the Liberalism of the Ante-Home Rule period; and we knew that we should have a tough and perhaps a forlorn fight. We were taken to a person of great authority—a cool, cautious man. He did not think a Nationalist could win the seat, and proposed instead, a Liberal—a gentleman that has since done splendid service to the

Home Rule cause, but who was then ranked among our opponents. Parnell's manner at this interview was exquisite—deferential, patient, self-repressed.

At this period he frequently gave me the impression at meetings of this kind of not really living in the midst of the scene at all. He seemed abstracted, spoke in a slow, hesitating—if I may use the word—dreamy kind of way. So it was on this occasion. When we came back, he did not make any allusion to the interview until I did so; whatever there was in it of disappointment, did not excite in him resentment. In some respects he was a man slow to resent. He gave an amused smile and a very good-humoured comment on some of the incidents; but he spoke as though it were an affair that did not in the least concern him. Certainly there was not the remotest sense of his position as the leader of a party and of a country being imperfectly considered.

The change in the position of the Irish Leadership was brought before the notice of Parliament in a very prominent manner at the very beginning of the Session of 1880. On the night we met to discuss the Queen's Speech, Parnell got up from his seat on the third bench below the gangway, and strongly, though in his usual self-repressed manner, assailed the Government for making no attempt to deal with the Land Question, which, —with the Land League already stretching out its

giant limbs, and with the form of famine stalking over the country—was in a much more serious and advanced position than the Ministers had yet begun to appreciate. I remember well that even then Parnell had become a figure of such prominence and interest, that when he rose there was an immediate straining of necks and rising in seats in the Strangers' Galleries—one of the surest tests of the amount of public interest a Member of Parliament excites. The speech was regarded as violent by the Liberals, and Mr. Shaw, rising immediately after, and from the opposite side of the House, was received from their benches with a welcome and defiant cheer.

It was no wonder that Mr. Parnell should not take his leadership too seriously; for there were other reasons to make him pause besides his own self-distrust. The Irish party had promptly split into two halves on the day that Parliament met. Confident in the good-will of Mr. Gladstone—which was justified: confident in his power to give Ireland what she then wanted—which was a hope not realized—the more moderate sat on the Liberal benches. The followers of Mr. Parnell, on the other hand, desirous of placing in evidence their perpetual hostility to all and every form of government from Westminster instead of College Green kept their seats on the Opposition side of the House. They also felt that the exigencies of Mr. Gladstone's position—the hostility of the

House of Lords—the opposition of the Whig element in his own party, and even in his own cabinet, to Radical land reform—would prevent him from meeting the demands of Ireland with adequate satisfaction.

It will suffice to recall one or two incidents of this first session of Mr. Parnell's leadership. Two in particular require to be noted. The admission of Mr. Bradlaugh was, it will be remembered, one of the fiercest questions of that Session. There was some doubt as to what the Irish party should do, and at that period they had not been drawn into that close discipline which made them so united and so splendid a fighting machine in after years. Mr. Parnell, for a long time, hesitated as to his course, and received conflicting counsels from his followers. There were those who thought that Mr. Bradlaugh's claim was legally sound; that the attack on him amounted to religious persecution, and was grossly insincere in some quarters, and that, finally, as he had been a strong friend of Ireland in her darkest days, he ought to be defended by Irishmen in his day of need. On the other hand, there was a section of the party—the late A. M. Sullivan was the leader of them—who felt strongly on the question from the religious point of view, and who also thought that the defence of Mr. Bradlaugh might bring the Irish party into conflict with an important element in Irish political life.

For awhile Mr. Parnell's action was undecided, and his name did not appear in the earlier divisions. But I remember well his coming down to the lower smoking-room one night, and declaring that he was disgusted with some of the bigoted sentiments he had heard expressed, and that he felt he must speak. I agreed with his views of the Bradlaugh question, but I dreaded the consequences to his position as a leader if he expressed them, and asked him to pause; but he had made up his mind, and went up and made a speech on Mr. Bradlaugh's behalf. That speech excited a good deal of attention, and it would be well worth perusal even to-day. Mr. Parnell declared in this speech that the opinions of Mr. Bradlaugh were not his; I think that he even went the length of saying that they were revolting to him; and in thus speaking, he was quite sincere. I shall have to give, by-and-by, the story of how Mr. Parnell declared his faith on a portentous occasion in his life; for the moment let me say that the social remedies which were preached by Mr. Bradlaugh were never acceptable to Mr. Parnell. I have heard the question discussed in his presence more than once—the question whether the pressure of population could be or ought to be relieved in the manner suggested in some of Mr. Bradlaugh's publications. He always took up the strongest position on the other side—a position stronger than I have ever heard taken by any other public man

of his time—a position even stronger than that I once heard from Mr. Gladstone, though the difference between the two men was of phrases, perhaps, rather than words: in horror and detestation of Mr. Bradlaugh's social doctrines they were at one.

The other occasion to which I shall allude was on the famous night when Mr. Gladstone made the motion that Mr. O'Donnell should be no longer heard. This episode arose in this wise: M. Challemel Lacour was then the French Ambassador to this country. An old and somewhat fanatical Republican, he was an object of special attack by the French Conservatives; and with that party Mr. O'Donnell always cultivated relations. Mr. O'Donnell accordingly put on the notice paper a question with regard to the French Ambassador, which may be summed up as asking whether it was true or not that M. Lacour had given an order for the cold-blooded murder of some political opponents. The Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Sir Charles Dilke, of course resented the attack on the representative of a friendly Foreign power, and gave a somewhat warm answer. In those days, any member who felt himself aggrieved by an answer or anything else, had the right to there and then move the adjournment of the House; and Mr. O'Donnell took advantage of this privilege. There was not a single colleague of Mr. O'Donnell's who sym-

pathised with his attack on M. Lacour, least of all did Mr. Parnell; and then there had been recent passages between the two men, well calculated to produce resentment. Mr. O'Donnell had taken an extremely prominent part in the attacks on Mr. Bradlaugh, and had made some of the best and most rancorous speeches against him; Mr. Parnell, as has been seen, had taken the opposite side. It was suspected, too, that Mr. O'Donnell was not particularly pleased by the election of Mr. Parnell to the leadership; his own ambition pointed him out to himself as the proper recipient of such an honour.

And here I had better tell a circumstance in connection with these two men which will throw some light on Parnell's character. I had come into the House with a vague sense of awe for Mr. Parnell. Never seeing him except at long intervals—and then only for a few moments, and usually bringing him before my imagination as the central figure of a tremendous picture in which he stood alone, and all the mighty forces of the empire against him—I had drawn in my mind a portrait of a man, cold, relentless, almost without human feeling. The short conversation I had had with him in reference to the death of Isaac Butt, to which I have already alluded, had confirmed this impression. I was, therefore, a little surprised, when I found him somewhat disturbed by the growing estrangement between himself and Mr. O'Donnell. They were both staying at Westminster Palace Hotel, and

Mr. Parnell surprised me by telling me of some approaches to a renewal of good relations, which he had made at breakfast to Mr. O'Donnell—approaches, which in their apologetic humility and in their tenderness of comradely feeling, were unlike the Parnell I had imagined. And they were, I may add, also very unlike the Parnell I afterwards knew.

But Mr. O'Donnell had not accepted the advances of Mr. Parnell; and undoubtedly at this period, there was no friendship between the men. What followed is made the more important by this fact. I was sitting beside Mr. Parnell during this sitting. While amid the groans and despair of the House, Mr. O'Donnell was utilising his motion for adjournment, to repeat the charges against the French Ambassador, Mr. Gladstone, after a hurried consultation with the Speaker, got up, and made the motion that Mr. O'Donnell should be no longer heard. The motion, it was elicited, had not been made before for two hundred years. Mr. Parnell, up to this point, had liked Mr. O'Donnell's proceedings as little as Mr. Gladstone himself; but this made him angry. "It's because O'Donnell is an Irishman that they do it," he said to me; and jumped to his feet promptly to oppose Mr Gladstone's motion. Deep down in his heart there always lay that sense that Irishmen were "put upon" by Englishmen—he never ceased to resent it. It was possibly—in addition to

other forces, which I shall discuss in their proper place—the secret of his final blunder; it was the feeling that laid him last Sunday in a premature grave. This proud resentment of English domination—even of English condescension—is the root of the hold he exercised over so many Irish hearts. The recollection of this splendid pride of his, now, as I write, makes me think of him with a passion of regret that dims my eyes.

One other incident I must give from this first Session of 1880. There was one night a somewhat sharp collision between Parnell and Mr. Gladstone. There were several sharp passages in this Session as the Liberal and the Irish party were drifting asunder, and Mr. Parnell had used language which sounded like the threat of obstruction. Mr. Gladstone rose immediately after, and took up the challenge. Speaking quietly, but yet very firmly, Mr. Gladstone said that he was an old man and Mr. Parnell was a young one; but that he might find this game of obstruction would not pay. Mr. Parnell received this attack in a way that astonished me. He was always a very unaccountable man; quiet, when he was expected to be tempestuous, and suddenly tempestuous without any visibly adequate cause. His answer to Mr. Gladstone was mild and deprecatory, and almost apologetic. There came a day when comparisons between their comparative ages was made in a very different spirit.

Looking over some accounts that I wrote at the time of this period, I find that Mr. Parnell was very active in this Session—more active than I had remembered; and that in all the prolonged and stormy sittings, he had taken an active part. He proposed important amendments constantly; was ever in the forefront of the fight, as watchful and vigilant as a hawk, and at all critical moments descended on Mr. Gladstone or Mr. Forster with the scathing attack he could so well make. It is well to remember him thus in his first Session of leadership; it will bring into clearer relief the difference of later years.

And in the recess that followed, he was still the same man; fiercely active, tireless, ready to go anywhere, to do anything; the effective, ubiquitous, self-sacrificing commander-in-chief, sharing the hardships and the toil of the humblest member of the rank and file; and it was a recess that made terrible demands upon every Irish politician. The Land League had reached its highest point of strength. In every village of the country it had enrolled in its ranks nearly every adult man; funds were pouring in from America—sometimes at the rate of two, three, or four thousand pounds a week; in estate after estate the tenants were organised into solid and bold and indissoluble bodies that were fighting the landlords or were dictating their own terms; and at the same time there was an outburst of that violent crime which

is the sinister camp-follower, that nearly always lurks behind the revolutionary army of a class or a nation rising from oppression.

Ireland, in short, was delirious and intoxicated, full of one of those infectious and all-pervading movements that shake her whole system as a fierce wave the whole of a ship. Everywhere took place gatherings, which in their enthusiasm, in their hopefulness, in their vast multitudinousness, recalled the great days of O'Connell, when he also seemed to have brought the nation within sight of the promised land. Meantime, everybody was awaiting the word from Parnell. The Ministry had announced that they were going to bring in a Land Bill in the coming Session of Parliament; and already a commission was going through the country obtaining materials for judgment—as if materials sufficient had not been already supplied by a million deaths through hunger, and three to four millions of lost Irish citizens through emigration. What were the people to do? To trust to the Bill of the Government or to go on with their own organization and agitation? In short, was the storm to be abated, or to rise to the cyclone which even the British Empire could not resist, and which would make the tenantry independent of the good will or power of even the best Government, or of the most Liberal Parliament? It can well be imagined what kind of advice would come from a man like Parnell—daring and

distrustful, especially of English statesmen. His word was to go on; and the command—given in quiet and almost cold language—was all that was required to fan the flames into a vast conflagration, that spread over the whole land with the rapidity, the fury, sometimes the devastation of the prairie fire.

On this storm Parnell rode with perfect self-possession — vigilant, daring, cautious, prepared for the worst, as will be shown by an anecdote I shall tell presently. I saw a great deal of him during a portion of this recess. I was not at the meeting in Ennis—the meeting in which he announced the policy of boycotting. I am not discussing Mr. Parnell's political opinions or actions in this volume; I give the famous passage, accordingly, without comment.

"'Now, what are you to do,' he said, 'to a tenant who bids for a farm from which another tenant has been evicted?'

"Several voices: 'Shoot him!'

"Mr. Parnell: 'I think I heard somebody say, "Shoot him!" I wish to point out to you a very much better way—a more Christian and charitable way, which will give the lost man an opportunity of repenting. When a man takes a farm from which another has been unjustly evicted, you must show him on the roadside when you meet him; you must show him in the streets of the town; you must show him in the shop; you must

show him in the fair-green and in the market-place, and even in the place of worship, by leaving him alone; by putting him into a moral Coventry; by isolating him from the rest of his country as if he were the leper of old—you must show him your detestation of the crime he has committed.'"

But I was at the meeting in Kilkenny, which took place a short time afterwards. From Kilkenny we had to drive several miles to catch a train to Cork, which Parnell was about to visit on the following day for the first time since his election that year. There was a singular proof of how strong a hold the new leader and the new policy already had upon the people. In most of the houses we passed during the dark evening there were candles in the windows, the silent signal of the love that was felt by the dwellers inside. At many points on the cross-roads, the people were standing in groups, to give Mr. Parnell and his friends a greeting as they passed. Some of the persons who waited were children with bare feet that painfully shivered after the long wait of hours.

There was an incident on the way that struck me. Our journey, which was sufficiently dreary in the cold night-air and in the darkness, was enlivened by Mr. T. D. Sullivan, who has a splendid voice and an exhaustless repertoire. Parnell sat silent, as he was able to do for long stretches of time, and as he usually did until he was spoken to and was

aroused by the conversation of others. Suddenly his voice rang out, and he vigorously called upon our driver to stop. Then he jumped off; and there, on the road before, was a heavily-laden cart, with a man lying drunk, his head just under the wheel, so that another half-inch's advance by the horse would have severed his neck from his body. Parnell took the leading part in dealing with this emergency; wheeled the cart on to the grassy side of the road, so that it could not be in the way of any other passing vehicle; and placed the unfortunate drunkard, who, meantime, slept the sleep of the just, in a position of safety. All this he did with the quick intelligence of the situation, which came from his country training, with much tenderness and concern. "The poor horse," he said, "has more sense than this fellow;" for the horse, as by instinct, had just stopped at the point where a further advance would have meant death to the driver.

The reception in Cork was one of the most extraordinary sights I ever beheld; never equalled by anything I have seen elsewhere, and never surpassed, except on one occasion—the next year, in the same city—when another and an even greater welcome was given to Parnell.

Cork is a city especially adapted for a demonstration. Its streets, alternately wide and narrow, allow one to witness a demonstration in all its aspects. In one spot you are struck by its sweep and

amplitude, and then, passing into a narrow street, with crowds packed together, the human face repeated in tens of thousands of shapes, exercises over you the strange tyranny described in one of De Quincey's inspired dreams.

The reception of Cork to Parnell in the recess of 1880 brought forth all these features of the city. In every window, to the topmost point, on roofs, on every point of vantage, you saw men and women cheering, waving handkerchiefs. In a single window you saw not one or two, but dozens of faces; and this in window after window, through street after street, for mile after mile, until in the end it looked as if every brick in the walls of the city was a human face. There were, besides, processions of the trades, with banners and bands and the continued sound of cheers; in fact, the scene was indescribable.

And how felt Parnell in the midst of this triumph, along Cork's Appian Way? I remember him well that day—as well as though it were but yesterday. He still looked young. The beauty of his delicate features, his cheeks healthy and full, the trim beard, the whole expression pleased and yet not proud—boyish in its ingenuousness and its suggestion of modest wonder and deprecation—all combined to give him a look of fresh and immortal youth. This air of boyishness, ingenuousness, deprecatory shyness, was increased by a small, low-crowned, brown hat which he

wore—the *negligé* hat of the traveller. I looked at him several times; if I remember rightly, I sat in the same carriage, and the pleasant smile of that handsome young face on that day of opening greatness comes back to me with startling freshness of recollection.

And he spoke as he looked. He expressed sincere wonder at the reception, which was evidently a surprise to him, and, perhaps for the first time, brought home to him the vast majesty and sweep of the forces he was about to control. "Is not it extraordinary?" he said several times. "An emperor might be proud of it!" was another of his observations—said with a tone that accentuated his own unworthiness, much more than the splendour of the reception.

We had, after it all, to make, or almost to fight our way through a vast crowd to get to the platform from which we were to speak. It was, of course, mere dumb show, with that vast, swaying and humming crowd in front; but even then Parnell did not forget that kind thoughtfulness for his friends and colleagues which he always was accustomed to display in those earlier years. He took the trouble, after his own speech, to push to the front of the platform again, and to say a few words of kind and complimentary introduction for me —then young and unknown.

I should not part from this day without telling an incident, of which I knew nothing then, but

which was known to Parnell. Some officials of the city, who had formerly been allied with the more extreme elements, had given offence, one of their offences being that they were to give the light of their countenance to Parnell—the leader of a Constitutional movement and, therefore, unworthy of the acceptance of men who adhered to the one true gospel of physical force. At Blarney, where we had alighted from the train, a few miles outside Cork, these men had been approached by a small collection of armed men; loaded revolvers had been placed at their heads, and they had been compelled to get out of the carriage in which they had seated themselves, in Parnell's procession. I have heard that there was also a project to kidnap Parnell himself, and take him off to Mallow, by way of breaking his chance of making a Constitutional agitation. Such incidents as these will bring before one's mind the kind of passions and forces which Parnell's genius ultimately brought under the control of good sense and a Constitutional movement. It is also significant of the dare-devil character of the man—not the less dare-devil because he had the cold calculation and the determination to win of an utter realist—that he went through the glorious procession in the sunlit streets with as open and free a smile as anybody in the crowd, without a thought of the grim spectre that had obtruded itself on this bright and triumphant scene.

And now a final recollection from this period. He had promised to attend a meeting in Galway —my constituency at that period—on October 24th. I went to see him in Avondale a few days before—this was the period when he was always certain to be found, for a portion of the vacation, in his ancestral home. I always will keep my recollection of Parnell on the day I visited him there, as the picture of him I would best like to preserve in my memory. He used, in those days, to take a great deal of exercise, at least during the recess. He also used to wear clothes, smart and comfortable, rather than ordinary or fashionable. I remember seeing him one night in a small restaurant in the Strand, in the middle of a recess—it was while he was still young in Parliament, and only getting to be known — and his dress was certainly astonishing. He had a short coat, like a shooting-jacket—if I mistake not, it was made of frieze, or some coarse material, such as you would expect to see on a man going to a pig-fair; and he carried a big blackthorn stick. He was all alone, and looking out into the streets wistfully, as if he would have been glad if, in this great and lonely city, there were someone to whom he could talk. I felt very much inclined to go in and speak to him; but I knew him very slightly at the time, and thought that it would have been intrusive.

On the occasion of my visit to Avondale, he was dressed in a similar way. All his clothes were

short, tight-fitting—the clothes of a man that was always walking in all kinds of weather, or the smart get-up of a man going on a yachting tour. He was in splendid physical condition. His cheeks were not ruddy, they never were that. His complexion, indeed, was one of the things that always struck the observer as marking him out with uniqueness from other men. I remember, years ago, seeing an article in which this suggested to a Conservative writer a comparison, moral as well as physical, between him and the sea-green Incorruptible Robespierre. But he looked healthy. He had thinned himself down to a fine point. He walked, too, splendidly; with the light and brisk air of a man that had gone through the training for a prize fight, or a long distance match. Further, this air of a highly-trained athlete was accentuated by the appearance of his head. The top of his head began to get bald at an early age; it was the one point in his physical appearance that ever seemed to give him any concern, or even thought. He would often speak of the subject. One of the first things he looked at in a man was whether his hair was in good condition. On one momentous occasion, he was looking down at the House of Commons from one of the side galleries—Mr. Richard Power was beside him. Doubtless, the House—which always watched all Parnell's movements with the fascinated attention he was everywhere able to excite—imagined that the words which

dropped from the Sphinx-like lips of the man of destiny, were solemn, or fateful, or malignant. What he was really saying was, "What a number of bald-headed men there are in the House of Commons."

It was one of the results of this concern for his hair that he was always adopting some new remedy —that is, in the years of which I am speaking. On this occasion he had just had his head shaved, and this made his face look even thinner. I complimented him on his looks and figure. He said, "Yes, I'm in very good form; quite equal, I think, to five years' penal servitude from old Forster!" This he said in that quiet undemonstrative way of his, which, as everybody will now know, meant everything; and I have no doubt that at that period he contemplated a long sentence of penal servitude as one of the probable contingencies of his political career, and he was quite prepared to take it.

It was at Galway that he made the speech about "taking off his coat." I will give the passage again, as I have said, not discussing it from a political point of view: "I wish to see the tenant farmers prosperous; but large and important as is the class of tenant farmers, constituting as they do, with their wives and families, the majority of the people of this country, I would not have taken off my coat and gone to this work if I had not known that we were laying the foundation in this move-

ment for the regeneration of our legislative independence."

Before we went to this meeting, he spoke of Mr. Forster and the policy of coercion—which, then, was beginning to cast its anticipatory shadow—with that tone of quiet rage which people afterwards came to understand so well. His blood was already up, and he was resolved to fight Mr. Forster foot to foot, and with all the determination he could put forth. We shall, by-and-by, see him in a very different mood towards the Chief Secretary.

Finally, I must write—but the event was so insignificant as to scarcely require mention—that towards the end of the recess, Parnell was made the defendant in a great State trial. Nobody attached the least importance to that event. It was known that there were several Nationalists on the jury who regarded Parnell not as a criminal deserving punishment, but as a patriot and a statesman who had an imperishable place in the hearts of his people. The one fact of interest I remember about it is that Parnell, going down to the court one day, made that observation about rejoicing to see others do the work, which I have already quoted; and, that during the trial, he startled and amused the world by wearing in the court a small skull cap, which seemed singularly inappropriate in one so young. Of course, the jury disagreed.

This was the Parnell of the Parliament and the recess of 1880; and, I think, the figure he makes at that epoch is worthy of all that has ever been said of his unselfish devotion, his untiring labours, his reckless daring, for the cause of Ireland.

CHAPTER V.

A PRISONER.

NOR was the Parnell of the next year much different. He was not quite so regular, perhaps, as he had been in the House of Commons, but I do not remember that he was absent on any great occasion which demanded his presence. On the contrary, I believe, he was in the midst of the whole fierce fight, and took his full share of the work.

It was a fierce time. At the very opening of the Session, the Government announced that they had resolved to bring in a Coercion Bill. The Irish party had equally announced that to such a measure they would oppose every single kind and form of obstacle that the forms of the House would permit. I thought then—I think quite as clearly now—that the policy adopted by the Irish party at this crisis was the right policy, and has been justified by events; but I was not blind even then to the inherent weaknesses of the policy of obstruction. My impression of Mr. Parnell is that he was an essentially narrow man. He

broadened in time, and became, I believe, to a large extent in the end, far-seeing and just in his observation; but he never altogether lost his narrowness. I believe that he never could have done the extraordinary work he did if he had not been narrow. The doubts, hesitations, the difficulties he would have seen, would have rendered impossible the daring and apparently hopeless enterprises on which he quite calmly and self-confidently entered. It was thus with the policy of obstruction. For instance, I remember gravely arguing with him in the Westminster Palace Hotel, in my very first Session of Parliament, that obstruction was not omnipotent over the House of Commons; that it could, and probably would, be put down. But he did not see this; he spoke as if obstruction were a weapon which could never be blunted, and never fail. I should add that he discussed the question quite equably and fairly; the impatient dictator unwilling to listen to a word of counter-argument exists only in the newspapers. Parnell—though when he made up his mind was irrevocable—was rather fond of seeking counsel. I remarked this with some surprise a short time after I became one of his colleagues, and Tim Healy, who knew him much better, remarked that I was right, and that he did not object to his having his thinking done for him. He did come to care very little for the opinion or advice of others; but that was in the latest stage. Parnell, indeed, was very self-

contradictory. In some respects he was a very pliant man; in travelling, for instance, at the period when he did travel with his colleagues a good deal, he would do exactly as his companions suggested. In council, too, he listened very carefully; in conversation he was always glad to let others take the lead; but, then, when he did really take the trouble to come to a conclusion on a serious matter, he was immutable. Not the wishes or opinions of ten thousand men could have changed him. Mr. Sexton put it well one evening when we were discussing his character: "You find," he said, "on top a little dust, that you can brush hither or thither—just as you please; and then you come on granite."

This is not the place to repeat the well-known story of the great struggle against Coercion. It will suffice to give an account of one or two of the great scenes. Parliament had met on Thursday, January 6th. We immediately began proposing amendments to the Queen's Speech, in order to postpone to the latest possible date the introduction of the Coercion Bill, which the Queen's Speech had announced, and it was not until Monday, January 24th, that Mr. Forster got the opportunity of proposing even the very first stage of his Bill, namely, its introduction. In the meantime, we had been deserted by Mr. Shaw and the other moderates of the Irish party, and Mr. Parnell was now left with a small following of not more than

thirty men. However, this did not in the least diminish our spirits or abate our efforts, and we kept on doggedly fighting, making speeches after speeches, proposing amendment after amendment until we reached Monday, January 31st. Even then the discussion on the first stage of the Bill had not been finished. I will continue the narrative by a quotation from another work of mine. The evening began with an announcement from Mr. Gladstone that the first stage of the Bill should end at that sitting :—

"The Prime Minister made this announcement, as it were, carelessly; but there was a portentous underswell in his voice which showed the supreme importance he attached to it. The Ministerialists, of course, understood the *mot d'ordre* of the speech, and loudly cheered ; the Conservatives, equally exasperated against the Irish, and equally delighted at the success of their efforts in hounding on the Government, shouted their applause, and the small Parnellite band, quite as quick as anybody else to see the dire significance of the Premier's announcement, set up a cry not as loud, but quite as defiant, as any that had come from either of the other parties.

"The debate resumed its course with apparent placidity. The House was almost empty during the whole evening, and it was not until one o'clock that the contest began. At that hour the usual motion for adjournment was made. The reply of the Prime Minister was laconic and emphatic. 'I beg to say,' he answered, 'on the part of the Government, that we propose to resist that motion.' The strange calm that had reigned over the House during the evening was now broken. Passion was let loose, and active steps were taken on both sides for hot and sharp encounter. The Ministerialists, on their side, had begun their preparations for the coming contest at an early hour. About half-past ten there began to be a gradual melting away of the House, and there were left no

more than half a score of the dullest and drowsiest, the most reticent and most docile members of the Ministerial party. Of the men thus told off to remain through the sitting, the majority left the House and were lost to observation in the various departments of the building. The Irish members settled down steadily to their work, and followed each other in the empty House in monotonous succession. During the first night the proceedings were not ill-humoured on either side. Mr. Biggar was grotesquely humorous after his fashion, and the few English members in the House sympathized with his mood. When he declared that the Irish members were accused of wasting time, there came from English members a deprecatory 'No, no,' whereupon the member for Cavan beamed on the House, and the House beamed back upon the member for Cavan.

"The struggle continued all through Tuesday, Dr. Lyon Playfair taking the place of the Speaker when the latter became exhausted. About eleven o'clock on Tuesday night an appeal was made by Sir Richard Cross, on the part of the Conservatives, to the Speaker to put in use the rule against wilful obstruction. The Speaker did not think the time had come for putting this rule into operation, but at the same time hinted very plainly that in his view there was very strong evidence of 'combination for the purpose of wilful and persistent obstruction.' After giving this ruling, Mr. Brand retired from the chair, and Dr. Lyon Playfair again took his place. For a while the point as to 'obstruction' was dropped; but soon Sir Stafford Northcote came forward, and again urged the Chair to deal summarily with the Irish members. But Dr. Playfair still refused to take action; and when, finally, an appeal was made to him by Sir Stafford Northcote to name Mr. Parnell, and he still refused to act, Sir Stafford and the Conservative party left the House in a body.

"The Irish members now changed their course, and, abandoning any further motions for adjournment, proceeded to debate the main question, which was an amendment on the part of Dr. Lyons, in opposition to Mr. Forster's demand for leave to introduce the Coercion Bill. Each member spoke at the greatest length that either his physical or his mental resources would permit. Under this change the House became transformed: the heat and excite-

ment of a crowded Chamber gave place to the languor, silence, and calm consistent with a House of but eight or nine members, most of them either fast asleep or in broken slumber. The visitors, whose attendance throughout the scene had been marvellously regular, broke down under disappointment of the hope of further excitement; the Ladies' Gallery became absolutely deserted; there were vacancies even in the Strangers' Gallery, which had up to this remained crowded; and but one or two persons remained in the gallery for distinguished strangers. The mournful silence of the Chamber was broken only by the voice of the Irish member and the snore of a sleepy member. It was something of a relief to the dread quiet when Sir William Harcourt now and then carried on a low but audible conversation with some of his colleagues. It was on this morning that Mr. Sexton delivered the second of the remarkable speeches by which he was at last forcing himself into the position of one of the most adroit and most eloquent orators of the House. He spoke from a quarter to five until twenty minutes to eight. This speech, delivered to an audience of seven or eight people, nearly every one of them in a state of complete or partial slumber, was complete in every one of its sentences, had every idea well worked out, every word happily chosen. Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, one of the few representatives of the Ministry who remained on the Treasury bench throughout the night, afterwards declared that he had listened to every word that Mr. Sexton had uttered, and that there was not throughout it all a superfluous syllable.

"Meantime, other Irish members were preparing to follow, and to continue the struggle as long as their physical strength would hold out. Some of them had taken broken snatches of sleep while one of their comrades was speaking, and at this time were washing off in the lavatories around the House the fatigues of the night. Inside and outside the House a state of electrical excitement prevailed that can only be appreciated by those who passed through these scenes. There were affrighting whispers of what might be done by savage mobs of Englishmen on the one side, by Irish desperadoes on the other. Some of the Irish members had been subjected to a certain amount of inconvenience as they walked home in the early hours of the morning. No one, in fact, knew what was

going to happen, but everybody had a vague feeling that something was about to occur, and something of a startling character. Inside the House there was a vague suspicion of an impending catastrophe. An English member informed Mr. Sexton, when the member for Sligo, after his speech, dragged himself down to the smoking-room, that 'something' would take place at nine o'clock.

"Mr. Leamy followed Mr. Sexton, and about a quarter to nine Mr. Biggar stood up. Meantime, there were many signs that the dreaded 'something' was about to take place. As if by some mysterious and occult influence, the House filled with extraordinary rapidity. As the clock approached the hour of nine, Dr. (now Sir Lyon) Playfair began to look very anxious and expectant. Mr. Gladstone and Sir Stafford Northcote had come in, and at nine o'clock the Speaker made his appearance. He was received with a burst of enthusiastic cheers, and it was evident from the benches on both sides, which were now almost crowded, that both the English parties had been told of what was about to come. Mr. Biggar had resumed his seat when the Speaker came in, and now rose to continue his speech; but the Speaker, who had entered with an air of strange determination, and with an ominous roll of paper in his hand, remained standing, and refused to see the member for Cavan. He then read the historic declaration that he would now close the discussion. Each sentence of his speech was received with boisterous applause from both Liberals and Conservatives. It is still painful to recall the looks of furious hate with which the Tory members looked towards the Irish benches. Meantime, the latter were without the assistance of their leader, for Mr. Parnell had gone to snatch a few hours' sleep at the Westminster Palace Hotel close by. Their hasty consultation was not concluded when the Speaker had put the question whether Mr. Forster's motion or Dr. Lyons' amendment should be accepted. In the midst of this uncertainty the precious seconds passed away. At last the doors of the House were closed, and nothing remained but to take part in the division. In sullenness and silence on both sides the division was taken. It was noticeable that, as the members passed each other to go into the different lobbies, there was not even a single exchange of the passing word between men of the opposite camps which usually relieves, in an agreeable manner, the conflict of parties. The

Speaker then announced the numbers: For the original question, 164; against, 19; majority for the Government, 145.

"The Speaker immediately afterwards proposed to put the original question, that leave be given to bring in the Bill. Mr. Justin McCarthy, as deputy-chairman of the party, rose to protest. The Speaker took no notice, and the member for Longford and he were standing and speaking at the same time, but not a word of either could be heard. The Irish representative was met with a storm of interruption which was almost deafening. Mr. McCarthy, with a tranquil and resolute smile, still held his ground. By a happy inspiration the Irish members determined not to go through the farce of a second division. First two, then two or three more, and finally all of them jumped to their feet, raised their hands—in most cases clenched in passion—and shouted 'Privilege! privilege!' for several seconds, many shaking their clenched fists with desperate anger, and moving their lips as if they were accompanying these menacing gestures with words of violence. Mr. Gladstone was notably pale and disturbed. The Speaker still remained standing, saying nothing, and the House became somewhat less vehement. At last the Irish members brought the painful incident to a conclusion by walking out of the House in single file, Mr. McCarthy leading the way, and bowing to the Speaker as they left. Some of the younger members of the House slightly cheered, but the Assembly generally remained silent. Then the original question was put, and it was carried without dissent. Immediately afterwards enthusiasm and excitement once more broke forth, and the cheering became still louder when Mr. Forster, in the usual manner, walked up the floor of the House from the bar with his Bill in his hand. Then there was a renewal of cheers when the measure passed its first reading without any dissent, and the sitting, after its forty-one hours' duration, came to an end."

We retired from the House to the small conference-room, which is close to the lobby. When the Speaker had first risen, Mr. Healy had dashed out of the House in order to fetch Mr. Parnell,

whose presence was felt to be necessary at so critical a moment. We had scarcely got into the conference-room when Mr. Parnell entered. His expression at that moment is also one of the most pleasant of my memories of him. There was that pleased and boyish smile on his face which is so characteristic of his early years. He was perfectly cool, and apparently very much pleased. When he came into the room, we all of us, excited by the tremendous scene through which we had passed, worn out by want of sleep, and still panting with impotent anger, burst into an almost hysteric cheer, and clapped our hands in the enthusiasm of our affection and welcome to our leader. There never was a moment, I dare say, in all his history, when he looked more kindly and more responsive to the affection he inspired.

The forty-one hours' debate had ended on Tuesday. The Wednesday immediately following we managed to waste by motions for adjournment. Meantime, the excitement was rising in Ireland and in England as well, and the two nations were approaching one of those spasms of violent rage and mutual hate which used to be so common in their history. On Thursday came a crushing blow. A short time before the meeting of the House, the report came that Mr. Davitt had been arrested. At this moment, Mr. Davitt in Ireland was the very heart and soul of the Land League movement. His years of suffering in penal servitude

had given him that profound place in the affection of the Irish heart which is always gained by suffering for the Irish cause. It was known that he had been released from penal servitude on a ticket-of-leave, but as he had served for the terrible length of seven years and seven months, it was assumed that the Government would hold that he had purged his sentence, and would never think of sending him back to all the horrors from which he had so tardily escaped. I remember speaking to Mr. Parnell a few moments after the news had arrived. He was standing in the lobby of the House, between the library and the tea-room, where so often he has held consultation, and where, alas! his figure will never again appear. I quote again from my former work as to what followed immediately afterwards:—

"When the House met there was no indication of the coming storm. Mr. Parnell rose from his seat in his usual tranquil fashion, and asked, in a tone of apparently no great concern, whether it was true that Mr. Davitt had been arrested. 'Yes, sir!' was the laconic reply. It speaks eloquently of the hideous passions which coercion begets that this intelligence was received with a tempest of cheers that would have formed a fitting welcome to a mighty victor in the field, or the accomplishment of a momentous popular reform.

"When, a few minutes after, Mr. Gladstone rose to propose the Rules of Urgency, Mr. Dillon rose at the same time. The Speaker called upon Mr. Dillon to sit down, and that gentleman shouted above the tumult of 'Order, order!' and 'Name, name!' the words, 'I rise to a point of order.' The Speaker resolutely refused to allow Mr. Dillon to proceed. Mr. Dillon thereupon folded his arms, and he and the Speaker remained standing for some minutes

at the same time. At last the Speaker was understood to name Mr. Dillon, though the decree could not be heard above the wild din. His suspension having been carried, Mr. Dillon was called upon to withdraw; he refused, and a noisy scene took place. Then the Serjeant-at-Arms invited Mr. Dillon to withdraw, and when the latter still refused, the Serjeant again advanced with the principal doorkeeper and a number of messengers, placed his hand on Mr Dillon's shoulder, and requested him to obey the order of the Speaker. 'If you employ force I must yield,' said Mr. Dillon, and then withdrew.

"The Prime Minister had scarcely again risen when Mr. Parnell stood up at the same time, and made the motion that the right honourable gentleman be no longer heard. The Speaker, however, refused to accept the motion, and threatened Mr. Parnell with suspension in case he continued. Again Mr. Gladstone got up, and resumed the sentence which had so frequently been interrupted. Mr. Parnell again rose. The Speaker declared that the conduct of the member for Cork was wilful and deliberate obstruction, and named him. When the division took place in the case of Mr. Dillon the Irish members had not yet made up their minds as to what was the proper course to adopt; but by the time that Mr. Parnell was named their tactics had been resolved upon. When the division upon Mr. Parnell's suspension was called, they refused to quit their seats. The division went on without them, and the House presented a curious spectacle with the Speaker left alone with the Irish party. The deserted and tranquil appearance of the House might have encouraged the illusion that the storm of passion had subsided, and given place to perfect quiet. The Speaker warned the Irish members of the consequences that might result upon what they were doing; Mr. Sullivan declared that they contested the legality of the proceeding. This exchange of language between the Speaker and the Parnellites was mild and courteous. The division over, Mr. Parnell was ordered to withdraw; but he refused to go unless compelled by force, and again the Serjeant-at-Arms and the messengers came forward and touched his shoulder. The Irish leader slowly descended the gangway, bowed to the Speaker, and walked out of the House with head erect and amid ringing cheers of his supporters. Once more Mr. Gladstone resumed the unfortu-

nate sentence, that, as he himself said, had been bisected and trisected already; but again he was not allowed to proceed, for Mr. Finigan rose and proposed the same motion that Mr. Parnell had proposed, that the Prime Minister be no longer heard. Once more a division was taken, and once more the Irish members refused to leave their places. The tellers and clerks took down the names of the contumacious members, and after the withdrawal of Mr. Finigan, the Speaker read out their names and suspended them all. The names were: Messrs. Barry, Biggar, Byrne, Corbet, Daly, Dawson, Gill, Gray, Healy, Lalor, Leamy, Leahy, Justin McCarthy, McCoan, Marum, Metge, Nelson, Arthur O'Connor, T. P. O'Connor, The O'Donoghue, The O'Gorman Mahon, W. H. O'Sullivan, O'Connor Power, Redmond, Sexton, Smithwick, A. M. Sullivan, and T. D. Sullivan.

"By this time the passion of the House was to some extent exhausted, and there was even some return of good-humour; but Mr. Gladstone remained grave, and proposed the suspension of the twenty-eight members with an air of painful preoccupation. Then the division was taken, and once more the Irish members refused to leave their places. The Speaker then called upon the different members in their turns to withdraw, and each in turn, and in practically identical language, refused to do so unless compelled by orce, and protested against the legality of the whole proceedings. The protests of the expelled members varied slightly, and there was also a difference in the manner of their exit. Some hurried away; while others, following the example of Mr. Parnell, bowed with gravity and solemnity to the Chair. The demeanour of the House varied from moment to moment: sometimes it laughed, sometimes it cheered, finally, it settled down into allowing the ncident to pass off in grave silence."

The next business before the Irish party in this Session was the Irish Land Bill, and I must recall an incident of that period by way of showing how small was still Mr. Parnell's authority over his party. The Land Bill, as is known, proposed the

Three F's, the final abandonment of which by Mr. Parnell has already been stated. He had always determined that he would not support anything but peasant proprietary; however, he had not announced this opinion definitely to his followers. It was not until a day or two before the division on the second reading of the measure that he finally announced his views. Meantime, the arrest of Mr. John Dillon had followed, and it was announced just as the Irish party were meeting to decide their plan of action. Then Mr. Parnell, without any previous consultation with his colleagues, announced that he was strongly in favour of abstaining on the second reading. As the Bill gave fair rents, free sale, and abolished eviction, its reception in Ireland had been generally avourable, and this was a decision which caused a good deal of dismay both inside and outside the party. When the resolution of abstention, which Mr. Parnell himself proposed from the chair, came to be finally taken, there were only seventeen votes upon his side; twelve voted with the other—thus there were only twenty-nine votes altogether. It will be seen how small and how divided was the party which Mr. Parnell afterwards led to omnipotence and union.

I hurry on from this point to the recess of 1881. There were the same vast and tempestuous gatherings all over the country, and at a large number of them Mr. Parnell spoke. These speeches, by the

way, caused him a great deal of effort, for, as I have so often said, he was not a man with a vast number of ideas or with a rich vocabulary. The ideas he had were few, and clear, and practical, and his capacity was to express them in a few clear, practical words. He complained to me once of the difficulty he had of saying something new, and the necessity at the same time there was for doing so, from the fact that he was reported in the first person by all the newspapers. This method of reporting his speeches, which to most public men is a gratifying sign of their interest to the public, was to him, I believe—at least, at this time —a source of discomfort and dissatisfaction. He would much have preferred the brief and colourless report which would have allowed him to make the same speech over and over again. In America reporting is not very faithful, though it is very picturesque, and I believe that during the tour I have already described he always made the same speech over and over again. He was blamed very much at the time for having got into a conflict with the *New York Herald* during this tour; the real explanation was that he got hold of this topic, and, in the absence of any others, was only too glad to stick to it.

I remember one Sunday morning, as I was driving early through the streets to one of these meetings, I caught sight of Parnell also driving to a railway station. He was not a man who loved

to get up early in the morning, and used to complain that these meetings gave him some physical pain. They certainly gave him some intellectual disturbance. However, he was ready to face his duty, and there he was, driving off in the grim and wet morning to take his place on the popular platforms. The Land Act had now been passed, but the Land League had not been dissolved, and was still gaining in strength, and to some extent in violence. Hundreds of men had already been imprisoned under the Coercion Act; still the country showed no signs of returning tranquillity; on the contrary, as was afterwards confessed, every new arrest seemed to add fuel to the flames. Mr. Parnell, meantime, in the midst of all this whirlwind, was pursuing his path in the dogged and practical manner which was characteristic of him then. It had been resolved that the Land Courts, established by the Land Act, should be "tested" by some cases, and Mr. Parnell himself worked for some days in the office of the Land League examining the books and documents there stored for the purpose of discovering cases which, in his opinion, would be suitable for the proper trial of this policy.

It was evident, however, that this kind of thing could not go on. At Leeds Mr. Gladstone, in the course of a great speech, used language which foreshadowed what everybody expected. He attacked Mr. Parnell and the policy of his party

with much eloquence, and finally he wound up with the famous passage in which he declared that "the resources of civilization against its enemies are not yet exhausted." On Sunday, October 9th, a few days afterwards, Mr. Parnell attended a meeting at Wexford. The growing excitement of the country, the sense of coming danger, added enormously to the enthusiasm of the gathering. Triumphant arches spanned the streets, evergreens and flowers covered the windows and doorways and lamp-posts; special trains brought thousands from the surrounding districts, and the greeting of Mr. Parnell was one of frenzied enthusiasm. His reply was as vehement as that of Mr. Gladstone, and to the fierce threat of the one there came a haughty defiance from the other. On the following day, speaking at a banquet at the same place, Mr. Parnell made an allusion to what he must have then been expecting:—

"I am frequently disposed to think," he said, "that Ireland has not yet got through the troubled waters of affliction to be crossed before we reach the promised land of prosperity to Ireland. . . . There may be—probably there will be—more stringent coercion before us than we have yet experienced."

I, again, make a quotation as to what followed:—

"The next day he went to his home in Avondale, and he reached Dublin by the last train on Wednesday night, having promised to attend the Kildare County Convention, which was to be held at Naas on the following day. He was to have left Kingsbridge Station

by the 10.15 a.m. train. On that same Wednesday a Cabinet Council had been held in England, and in the evening Mr. Forster had crossed over, authorized to arrest his chief opponent. Here is Mr. Parnell's own account of what actually occurred :

"Intending to proceed to Naas this morning, I ordered, before retiring to bed on Wednesday night, that I should be called at half-past eight o'clock. When the man came to my bedroom to awaken me, he told me that two gentlemen were waiting below who wanted to see me. I told him to ask their names and business. Having gone out, he came back in a few moments, and said that one was the superintendent of the police and the other was a policeman. I told him to say that I would be dressed in half an hour, and would see them then. He went away, but came back again to tell me that he had been downstairs to see the gentlemen, and had told them I was not stopping at that hotel. He then said that I should get out through the back part of the house, and not allow them to catch me. I told him that I would not do that, even if it were possible, because the police authorities would be sure to have every way most closely watched. He again went down, and this time showed the detectives up to my bedroom.

"In Foster Place there was a force of one hundred policemen held in readiness in case of any emergency. Mr. Mallon, when he entered the bedroom, found Mr. C. S. Parnell in the act of dressing, and immediately presented him with two warrants. He did not state their purport, but Mr. Parnell understood the situation without any intimation. It is not true to state that he exhibited surprise, or that he looked puzzled. The documents were presented to him with gentlemanly courtesy by Mr. Mallon, and the hon. gentleman who was about to be arrested received them with perfect calmness and deliberation. He had had private advices from England regarding the Cabinet Council, and was well aware that the Government meditated some *coup d'état*.

"Two copies of the warrants had also been sent to the Kingsbridge Terminus, to be served on Mr. Parnell in case he should go to Sallins by an early train. Superintendent Mallon expressed some anxiety lest a crowd should collect and interfere with the arrest, and he requested Mr. Parnell to come away as quickly as possible. Mr. Parnell responded to his anxiety. A cab was called, and the

two detectives, with the honourable prisoner, drove away. When the party reached the Bank of Ireland, at which, but a fortnight previously, Mr. Parnell had directed the attention of many thousands to its former memories and future prospects, five or six metropolitan police, evidently by preconcerted arrangement, jumped upon two outside cars, and drove in front of the party. On reaching the quays at the foot of Parliament Street, a number of horse police joined the procession at the rear. In this order, the four vehicles drove to Kilmainham. This strange procession passed along the thoroughfares without creating any remarkable notice. A few people did stop to look at it on part of the route, and then pursued the vehicles; but their curiosity was probably aroused by the presence of 'the force' rather than by any knowledge tha after a short lull, the Coercion Act was again being applied to the *élite* of the League. They stopped their chase after going a few perches, and at half-past-nine o'clock, Mr. Parnell appeared in front of the dark portals of Kilmainham.

"A few hours afterwards, he was interviewed by a reporter of the *Freeman's Journal*. The interview closed with one of those *mots* by which Mr. Parnell has marked important epochs in his career. 'As I rose to leave,' says the reporter, 'Mr. Parnell stated, I shall take it as an evidence that the people did not do their duty if I am speedily released."

This arrest produced tremendous excitement in Ireland. It was mourned throughout the country as a national calamity. Indignation meetings were held, unless they were dispersed by the police or the soldiery, in every town and village in the country, and, in most cases, the shutters were put on the windows as in times of death and funerals.

I am unable to give any account of the life of Mr. Parnell in Kilmainham prison. I had left for a lecturing tour in America for the Land League

a few days before, and I learned the news of the arrest for the first time when the mail-boat came to the steamer just outside New York; but he himself told me that the time passed very pleasantly, and that he had not been so happy for years. He was relieved, he said, from all sense of responsibility, and that to him was inexpressibly consoling. His health, however, I believe, suffered from that period. His constitution must never have been very strong, though he had the powerful physique which is often the companion of a constitution that does not last. At all events, from this time forward a great change came over the man, and he was never the old Parnell again. He himself repeated to me a somewhat Rabelaisian contrast which a colléague, since dead, made of his spirit before he went into gaol and afterwards. A few months afterwards, when Mr. Parnell had done something which showed the extraordinary difference there was between him and what he once was, I heard Mr. Healy, with an inexpressible sadness and bitterness, say, as we walked up and down the terrace of the House of Commons, "They have broken another great Irishman." "They" were the English rulers.

CHAPTER VI.

THE OPENING OF THE TRAGEDY.

MANY things had occurred, indeed, during Parnell's imprisonment which were well calculated to make him tire of political life. The "No Rent Manifesto," which had been forced upon him by the extreme party, had broken down utterly, and there had been an outburst of crime, so violent and so brutal, as to risk the entire chances of the movement.

When he came out, however, his reception was sufficient to make amends for any suffering, and for any disillusion he had endured. The Kilmainham Treaty, as it was called, was rightly judged to be a complete triumph for him. It involved the resignation of the Minister who had been the chief figure of the opposition to his policy; it got from the Government an Arrears' Bill, which was to save the homes of one hundred thousand tenants; and, it was intended to put a stop to the struggle between coercion and the Land League, in which, as Parnell too well

knew, the Land League had been hopelessly beaten. The House of Commons certainly indicated very clearly what it thought of the transaction, and the House of Commons was not, at this time, so well disposed to Parnell to form a judgment voluntarily in his favour.

"The first few days after his release from prison were days of veritable triumph. He received every recognition, public and private, of being master of the situation. Doubtful friends or bitter enemies rushed up to shake his hand and worship the rising sun. He was recognized to be—as beyond all question at that moment he was—the most potent political force in the British Empire. From no man did Mr. Parnell receive a recognition so eloquent, though probably so grudgingly, of the supremacy of his power and the completeness of his triumph at this moment as from his baffled and beaten opponent. By a singularly dramatic appropriateness, it was during the speech in which Mr. Forster was explaining his resignation that Mr. Parnell entered. 'There are two warrants,' Mr. Forster was saying, 'which I signed in regard to the hon. Member for the city of Cork also for intimidation. I have often asserted that these arrests for intimidation were——'

"At this point," goes on Hansard, "the entrance of Mr. Parnell into the House, and the cheers with which he was greeted by the Home Rule members, drowned the voice of the right hon. gentleman and prevented the conclusion of the sentence from being heard.

"And then Mr. Forster went on to use the following words which clearly prove the omnipotence of Mr. Parnell at this moment.

"'A surrender,' said the Chief Secretary a few moments later, 'is bad, but a compromise or arrangement is worse. I think we may remember what a Tudor king said to a great Irishman in former times: "If all Ireland cannot govern the Earl of Kildare, then let the Earl of Kildare govern Ireland." The king thought it was better that the Earl of Kildare should govern Ireland than that there should be an arrangement between the Earl of Kildare and his representative. In like manner if all England cannot govern

the hon. member for Cork, then let us acknowledge that he is the greatest power in Ireland to-day.'

"The prospect of the Irish people was equally bright. With the close of the land struggle, with the abandonment of coercion and the destruction of the hated coercion Minister, tranquillity promised to immediately return. On this point two authorities as antagonistic as Mr. Forster and Mr. William O'Brien were completely agreed. Finally, in the pages of the *Times*, which so often have been defaced with articles unfair to Ireland, there was this startling confession of Ireland's and of Parnell's triumph:

"'The recurrence of St. Patrick's Day, with its traditional celebration, its old toasts and its old memories, remind us that the Irishman of history and of tale is nowhere to be found. . . . The Irishman is becoming like the Englishman, that is, the Englishman of the dull, morose, self-satisfied sort—the man who sees everything and everybody from his own point of view, and pursues his object with a dogged indifference to all reasons, interests, feelings and beliefs. The Irishman, like the Englishman, is now righteous in his own eyes, and his righteousness is to hold money and land, and have the use of it as long as he can. . . . He has actually become a citizen of the world, and a very 'cute fellow. He has played his cards well, and is making a golden harvest. He has beaten a legion of landlords, dowagers, and encumbrances of all sorts, out of the field, and driven them into workhouses. He has baffled the greatest of legislatures, and outflanked the largest British armies in getting what he thinks his due. Had all this wonderful advance been made at the cost of some other country, England would have been the first to offer chaplets, testimonials, and ovations to the band of patriots who had achieved it. As the sufferers in the material sense are chiefly of English extraction, we cannot help a little soreness. Yet reason compels us to admit that the Irish have dared and done as they never did before. They are welcome to that praise. But they have lost, and it is a loss we all feel. Paddy has got his wish—he is changed into a landowner."

Everybody knows how in an hour all the splendid triumph of Parnell was overclouded. On

Saturday, May 6th, he went down to welcome Mr. Davitt, who was set free on the same afternoon. About the same hour on the same day, the assassins were hacking to pieces Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke. This blow — unexpected, overwhelming, absolutely disastrous—transforming the whole situation from the brightness of almost immediate self-government for Ireland, to the clouds and sufferings and hideous struggles against coercion—was as terrible a blow, undoubtedly, as ever befell a politician. Mr. Parnell was moved to the depths of his soul, and was scarcely restrained from issuing immediately a public proclamation announcing his retirement for ever from public life. As it was, he issued a proclamation along with Mr. Davitt and Mr. Dillon, which denounced the crime and the criminals; and he wrote to Mr. Gladstone a private letter, expressing his readiness to retire from public life if Mr. Gladstone thought that this would facilitate the settlement of the Irish question. He was reminded of this communication at another crisis in his history, when, unhappily, his character was less open to friendly suggestion.

The Phœnix Park assassination forced the Government—very much, I believe, against their will and contrary to their intentions—to persevere with another and a severer Coercion Bill. The Bill was resisted by the Irish party with great vigour; but it was resisted with little or no assist-

ance from their once ever-present and ever-vigilant chief. This was the period when there first came those periodical and mysterious absences, which were destined in time to be so habitual as to be accepted as part of the price that had to be paid for Parnell's matchless leadership. These absences were, of course, remarked by foes as well as friends. Sir William Harcourt made them the subject of a biting and humorous allusion, which has passed into history. The Irish party, enraged and humiliated, could shout their resentment in angry interruptions of the Home Secretary, but the force of the taunt was its truth. The Irish party were in the midst of a fierce and deadly struggle against an attempt to strangle the Constitutional liberties of their country. There they were, fighting day after day, night after night, impeding the business of an empire, defying a great Parliament, and the chief place among them was empty, with no more trace of the man who ought to occupy it than though he had vanished into space.

What frenzied consultation—what agonised conjectures — what despairful proposals this time brought forth! At last the report came that Mr. Parnell had gone to Paris, and some of his colleagues went over there to see him. Mr. Patrick Egan, the treasurer of the Land League, was a resident in that city at the time, and thus a council of the Land League could be held there; but in the hotel where Parnell was expected to be, there

was neither trace nor announcement of him. But several letters awaited him. There were all kinds of horrid suspicions. It was known that some of his relatives had ended tragically, and there was always, in those moments of crises, the dreadful feeling that anything might happen to Parnell. After a solemn consultation, it was decided to open some of the letters, in the hope of finding some trace or clue to the vanished chief. One of the letters was from a lady: it was scarcely glanced at; but it told enough: it was the first warning the Irish party had of the opening of the tragedy that finally engulfed Parnell and went near to engulfing Ireland. It speaks volumes for the reticence and the delicacy which—in spite of all their supposed garrulousness and the brutality sometimes of their political controversy—really distinguish Irishmen — that this fact was never communicated for years afterwards by the men who knew it, even to their intimate and close friends in the same party; and that the vast majority of the members of the party never heard of it at all.

Even in the course of the controversy, which death has just closed, I have felt it my duty to abstain from any word that might wound the unhappy lady who was one of the chief figures in the drama of Mr. Parnell. We have not heard her story; probably we now never shall. I, therefore, desire to pass over this part of the narrative as rapidly and as delicately as possible.

It was in 1880, and after his election for County Clare, that Captain O'Shea was first introduced to Mr. Parnell. The person to introduce them was that splendid old veteran who has just gone to rest in his ninety-first year—the O'Gorman Mahon. When Captain O'Shea came to London he invited Mr. Parnell to a dinner, to meet his wife and some other friends. The dinner was to take place at Thomas's Hotel, Berkeley Square—an hotel which Mrs. O'Shea, who lived in Eltham, and Mrs. Steele, her sister, were in the habit of frequenting on their visits to London. Mr. Justin McCarthy and, I have been told, Colonel Nolan were also of the dinner-party; but Mr. Parnell, who was even then unpunctual in all social engagements, did not turn up. There came that telegram at the last moment with which he had already familiarised people. The first meeting took place at a later date—at least, so I have been told.

Mrs. Steele gave a luncheon at the same hotel, and invited much the same guests. Mr. Justin McCarthy was certainly there; I believe Captain O'Shea was not. Parnell was, of course, late. Mrs. O'Shea occupied the interval before his approach in some good-humoured allusions to the coming guest, and at last, when a knock came, exclaimed, in the same half-mocking spirit, "Here comes the uncrowned king!" It is in such light and airy guise that appalling tragedy first sets his foot within our doors.

This was in 1880. A few days afterwards, Mr. McCarthy and Mr. Parnell were making one of their trips to Longford, and Mr. McCarthy first thought that the new acquaintance had made some impression on Mr. Parnell. Accustomed to dissect human feeling, Mr. McCarthy thought it somewhat suggestive that Mr. Parnell spoke slightingly of the personal charms of Mrs. O'Shea, in comparison with those of another lady who was present. As a matter of undeniable fact, Mrs. O'Shea was much the more attractive lady; and Mr. McCarthy thought that Mr. Parnell's observation proved the existence of the opposite feeling to that which he expressed.

This was in 1880, shortly after the General Election. At that time Captain O'Shea usually lived in Albert Mansions—a house in Victoria Street. His wife lived usually in Wonersh Lodge, Eltham. What time the first favourable impression which Mrs. O'Shea produced on Mr. Parnell developed into love, is not known. Captain O'Shea, in his evidence in the divorce case, says that he first heard that Mr. Parnell had gone to the house in Eltham in his absence in the summer of 1881.

From this time forward, it is pretty clear now that Mr. Parnell and Mrs. O'Shea lived as man and wife. Their relations in the heat of controversy have been denounced with sufficient vehemence, and some persons have gone the length of describing the adultery as one aggravated by every

possible circumstance—betrayal of friendship, abuse of hospitality, the break-up of a happy home, and the like. I have always declined to pass final and self-confident judgment after this fashion. I will dismiss the verdict passed upon it in such terms by saying that, at all events, it must be admitted that Mr. Parnell and the unhappy lady with whom he was associated, stuck to each other through peril and misfortune and disgrace with an unbroken fidelity which not every marriage would triumphantly bear.

However, society is able to trample on the violators of its laws with iron and relentless heel, and such relations as those between Mr. Parnell and Mrs. O'Shea cannot be entered upon without paying very heavy penalties. On the part of Mr. Parnell, it imposed disguises, subterfuges, and downright untruth, which, I persist in thinking, were antagonistic to his real and original nature. Some of the devices to which he had to resort have already been exposed to the world in the cruel glare of the Divorce Court, and in the still more merciless illumination of party controversy. But all that has been told can give but a faint indication of all that really occurred. Mr. Parnell must have felt from the very first the terrible risk he was running, not only to his own reputation and position, but to the great and sacred cause, the success of which depended almost exclusively on his single personality. He could not find in the

home and companionship of the woman he loved any of that ease which the legitimate household bestows. He had to assume false names, to lead a furtive and secret life, to go through incalculable physical fatigues in order to reach by devious ways the home to which, under ordinary circumstances, he could have gone in the light of day. Many a time I have seen him take a cab in the small hours of the morning, when under ordinary circumstances he probably would have taken the train. The story of his nocturnal wanderings would, indeed, make a better romance than any reality. During a portion of the time that he was involved in this unhappy passion, he had to escape the vigilant eyes of detectives, who were dogging his every step. More than once he had to take two cabs in order to efface the traces of his wanderings. He never dared to appear in public with the lady who was his companion and friend, except in the grounds of her suburban residence. Whenever he did go abroad with her, it was in the darkness of evening. I remember seeing him once on the pier at Brighton, and the sight gave me a sense of shock and of infinite pity. There was a lady along with him—I suppose it was Mrs. O'Shea—and a child. In that crowded place, on a summer evening, when everybody else was walking about in all the freedom of recognized affection, the great leader, to whom millions of people looked up with confidence and almost adoration, was creeping along

with furtive look to see if any familiar eye recognized him. I slid away, lest I should cause him any pain or embarrassment, and to-day, for the first time, I tell this incident.

It was Parnell's misfortune, as it was his strength, that he had no power of frank expansion to others. It is possible that a man of a different temperament, who could consult friends, who could reveal his difficulties and his troubles, might have brought exposure sooner, but probably he would have escaped much suffering. But Parnell was one of the furnaces that consumed their own smoke. To no human being did he ever breathe the remotest allusion to this dark reverse of his great and prosperous life. He made it an argument against his friends in the recent struggle that they knew of this intrigue for years. The argument was both unjust and ungenerous. There, of course, was plenty of suspicion, but there was no proof, and respect for his feeling, the awe in which everybody stood of him, the distance which he always placed between himself and even his closest friends—all this prevented anything like an allusion to the subject.

But the fruits of this state of things were but too palpable in Parnell himself, and too palpable in the state of his party. From the time that this unhappy affair began, there was an entire change in his whole appearance as well as in his manner. His face became sallow, his cheeks grew puffy, his

whole frame lost its splendid proportion and became stout and flabby. He seemed even to grow careless of the smallest details of his personal appearance. His beard that used to be neatly trimmed, grew ragged; he frequently allowed his hair, which, though thin at the top, was long, to remain uncut until it fell down to his shoulders; his dress also became pre-eminently shabby, and he used to wear clothes entirely unsuitable to his years; he constantly appeared in a knitted woollen waistcoat of hideous colour and make. In short, in the course of a couple of years, Parnell, bright, alert, thin, distinguished, with triumphant youth in every look, drifted into a sickly-looking, sluggish, middle-aged man, dressed in the clothes of a valetudinarian shopkeeper.

Similarly his whole manner entirely changed towards the members of his own party. There was a time when he and they used to constantly meet, in fact, they, like him, were mostly without any home in London, except the dreary and bleak solitude of their lodgings, and were only too glad to pass the greater part of their time in the House of Commons, working, eating, and during the obstruction period, also sleeping part of their time there. He and they used occasionally to meet in a restaurant. In those days also, he was in constant communication with them, and took no step without consultation with them. Between him and them there was the most democratic equality and easy

intercourse, by-and-bye, accustomed to live entirely away from them, meeting them but seldom in the House of Commons and never outside of it, there gradually grew up a gulf between him and them. There was no longer any interchange of confidence; a Parliamentary Committee had been appointed to act as a sort of Cabinet to him in the early days of his leadership, but after a few years of existence, this Committee was never consulted and ceased to exist. Parnell became every year lonelier and more distant. He never was capable of the acts of personal rudeness to his colleagues which have been reported in the press. Not only had he not addressed men as asses—as one writer represents him to have done—not only did he not reprove Mr. Healy once for addressing him as Parnell, instead of Mr. Parnell, but he was perfectly incapable of anything of the kind. But he never opened his heart to any man; he rarely even had a conversation with any man; his life in the House of Commons during the few hours he appeared there, was visible, but beyond that there was complete night, the veil was never even for a second lifted.

The Parliamentary battle, like a game of chess, changes its aspect from hour to hour, and sometimes from moment to moment, and never before has there been an instance of that game of stern and constant vigilance, being carried on by a leader who was constantly absent from the scene. With

all his weight of upwards of eighty years, Mr. Gladstone is even still as regular in his attendance at certain important hours in the House of Commons, as though he was in the very first flush of youth, and any Parliamentary figure of any importance who would be absent for even a week from the House of Commons, would gradually lose ground, while a minister who ventured to stop away except on good excuse would probably be called upon by his associates to immediately resign office. But Parnell, leader of a small fighting force that was ever getting into some encounter, that owed much of its power to constant and irritating intervention in all the business of the House—Mr. Parnell was frequently away for weeks at a time. To make the disappearances the more marked, for nearly ten years not a single member of his party, with perhaps the exception of his secretary, knew his address. There was no more idea of any method by which he could be reached than if he dwelt in the farthest of the fixed stars.

It need scarcely be pointed out that such a state of things carried with it bitter annoyance, and, sometimes, serious political dangers. The gravest stage of a Bill might be going on; an amendment of the most important and momentous character might stand in Mr. Parnell's name. There was never any certainty that he would appear, and, as a rule, he never did appear until the last possible moment; often he did not appear

at all. Nor is the whole case sufficiently stated when it is said that he did not lead. Not only did he not lead, but no other person was allowed to lead in his place. Gentle, overworked, unobtrusive almost to a disease, Justin McCarthy, the vice-leader of the party, never even attempted to take upon himself the duties of the absent leader. The sense of Parnell's right to lead was so keen and profound, that if anybody attempted to lead, he would be sure to array against him the majority of the party as a usurper or a conspirator. And Parnell, too, had changed, not merely in remoteness of manner to his colleagues, but in his estimate of them. There was a time when, genial and bright, and single-minded, he watched with pleasure and without suspicion each man do his work, according to his best ability; but there had come upon him in these years of seclusion a morbid and indeed wholly unjustifiable spirit of suspicion, and his estimate of human nature was often cynically low. The result of it was that he trusted no man, except, perhaps, two or three in his party, and that he formed suspicions and jealousies of others which were absolutely without foundation, and which, in the end, were one of the many causes that contributed to his destruction.

There were constant complaints, constant heart-burnings, moans, and sometimes almost a wail of despair over the position to which the

party was being brought. But whatever Parnell did, fortune seemed to fight so much on his side and on the side of Ireland, that his very faults raised him to a position of omnipotence and advanced his cause. It was a strange irony that he never was so powerful a leader as when he had practically ceased to lead, and that his neglect of his duties added to his personal prestige. He became the "mystery man" of British politics in a much more real sense than ever Lord Beaconsfield was. Never seen in the drawing-room, rarely seen in Parliament, speaking to no man outside his own party, and very rarely to any of them, and surrounded by the nimbus of a romantic love affair, guessed at, speculated upon, but entirely unknown with certainty in any of its details, he grew to the dim, and misty, and awful proportions of a veiled prophet.

If he was so frequently from the House of Commons, he became still more unknown in Ireland. For nearly eight years he may be said to have scarcely ever addressed an important meeting there, except on various occasions to be soon described. His absences at first were due to the overwhelming influence of the terrible passion that had taken possession of him. It appeared indeed more like a demoniac obsession, or like the pathetically palpable and resistless first love of a boy. He seemed incapable of spending twenty-four hours away from England without a fretful-

ness of spirit that was pitiful to see. I will give an instance.

There was an Exhibition in Cork which had been got up by men of all parties. It came at a time when Mr. Parnell's position as the leader of a growing party was just beginning to be recognized. But the strength of Toryism, and still more of Whiggery, was not finally broken, and it was still uncertain whether the wave of popular force, which was gathering, would finally wash the resistance to Parnellism away. After infinite pains, by means of methods vigorous and gentle, secret and open, the friends of Mr. Parnell in the city had succeeded in getting the Committee to allow him to take a part in the opening of the Exhibition, and the local leaders regarded this as one of the greatest triumphs for Mr. Parnell and his policy that Cork had ever achieved. Mr. Parnell went over, I forget on what business, to Ireland, and when that business, which occupied a day or so, was over, he made up his mind to return to London without going to Cork. The pedestal which his friends had thus laboriously raised for him, after months of labour, was to be left empty of his figure! I remember very well the night when it was evident that Mr. Parnell had resolved to disappoint these great hopes. He had dined, if I remember correctly, at the house of Dr. Kenny. After dinner the Cork visit was mentioned, and, by his hesitant and indefinite answer, it was plain to me that he

intended to leave Dublin by the early boat on the following morning for London. Everybody was horror-struck. I walked with him down O'Connell Street, discussing the matter and asking him to go, as gently but as persistently as I could ; as gently and persistently, he, on his side, evaded the subject. I left him at the door of Morrison's Hotel, but even then I was not satisfied that I had done enough. I found Mr. Sexton ; he agreed with me as to the great peril of Mr. Parnell's not appearing on such an occasion, and, though it was midnight, he went back to Morrison's Hotel with me, to see if his remonstrances, joined to mine, would have any effect. When we were admitted to the hotel we found Mr. Parnell studying a railway guide. He met us with that queer, deprecatory, plaintive smile of his, which in him was the more pathetic because of its contrast with the general hardness and resolution of his character. He received us kindly, and of course we spoke to him kindly too, and with the urgent representations which affection for him suggested ; but he made no promise. The next day he gave an even stronger indication of the terrible and resistless hold which passion had taken upon him. He went down by an early train, reached Cork just in time to rush to the Exhibition, rushed back to the train, travelled through the night, and caught the first boat the next morning. Altogether he spent about two hours in the city of Cork.

Many people in England wondered why it was that, in face of his plain weakness in the electorate and the palpable injury he was doing to the cause, Mr. Parnell was able to gather large crowds in Ireland during the recent struggle; but the fact is that for nearly half a generation Mr. Parnell's figure in Ireland was quite unknown. With the exception of the few days he spent every year, or every second year, at Aughavanna, he never set foot upon the soil of the country whose fate he held within the hollow of his single hand. By many of the youth of Ireland, therefore, his face had never been seen, and probably there are large parts of Ireland through which he could have passed without being recognized. The disinclination to visit the country, indeed, grew as years went on, and public meetings became, not only unpleasant, but apparently a torture and a terror to him. Over and over again he would promise to be present at some great gathering; when the time came he was represented by some substitute, whom he had asked to go at the last moment.

Thus, two years ago, the desperate state of the tenants on the campaign estates made necessary an appeal to the country. The appeal, which ended in the magnificent sum of sixty thousand pounds, was started by a great convention at Thurles; Mr. Parnell was represented by Mr, Sexton. When again another appeal became necessary, and the mission to America was

resolved upon, nearly every single member of the Irish party, many of them at great inconvenience, managed to find his way to the City Hall, Dublin, so as to make the farewell imposing enough to impress the people on the other side with the importance of the mission, and its character, as representative of the whole Irish party and the whole Irish people; the leader's place was again vacant.

It was in connection with the American mission that I met Mr. Parnell for the last time in friendly intercourse; but I must defer to a somewhat later period the description of that interview.

It may be said that Mr. Parnell was justified in not attending on either of these two occasions, because they were in support of the Plan of Campaign, of which he never approved; but, in truth, he was equally averse to any kind of meeting. The determination never to leave England and never to touch Ireland had become almost a disease. For instance, as to the meeting in the City Hall, his absence was rendered the more extraordinary by the fact that he offered to attend a meeting as a farewell to Messrs. Dillon and O'Brien; but he attached the condition that it should take place in Liverpool!

I remember a curious incident, which will show how little he enjoyed the evidences of his popularity. I forget just now what was the occasion, but I went to see him at Avondale. With his

characteristic solicitude and regard for the comfort of his friends, he asked me whether I had ever seen Glendalough, the gloomy lake of which Moore has sung, and which is one of the show sights of County Wicklow. We left soon after breakfast, and as it would be rather late before we got back, he proposed that we should take some lunch along with us. He sent down to an old female servant for some whole-meal bread, which is so much baked in houses in Ireland. With his own hand, and with that serious simplicity with which he did the most curious things, he cut and buttered the bread instead of asking the servant to do so, I watching him all the time with that fascination with which his simplest acts were noted by those brought in contact with him. He put this rough kind of a sandwich in two pieces of old newspaper, one for himself and one for me, and we started on an outside car.

As we drove along, he was intensely interesting as he pointed out the different localities we passed; especially he noted the large military roads which had been built in the troublous days of the past. He knew all their history intimately. It was Sunday, and that is the day on which the holiday makers of Dublin usually visit County Wicklow. If any of them had known that the great Irish leader was approaching them, they would doubtless have taken some means of expressing their respect, or at least of satisfying their curiosity; but he took

as many precautions to avoid recognition as if he were a murderer flying from the hue-and-cry. He stopped the car a quarter of a mile from Glendalough, walked in as quietly as he could, looking around all the time with a furtive uneasiness lest anybody should recognize him, which was at once painful and amusing to witness. Then, when he had pointed out to me the lake and its various features, we returned back to the point outside the village where he had told the car to await us. The car was not yet there, and he took a sandwich out of his pocket; then, looking cautiously around lest anybody should be near at hand, he turned his back on the road, looked into the fields in front of him, and shyly and slyly munched his sandwich as if he were a schoolboy eating a stolen apple. Poor Parnell!

It was on this occasion that I saw the first and only indication of the secret of his life. One of the peculiarities of these years was that while his dress became careless to the degree I have described, he abandoned the severe simplicity of his earlier period, and used to appear with a perfect blaze of precious stones on his fingers, a cat's-eye, large, beautiful and luminous, being especially remarkable. As he was leaning over the wall he took out his watch. It was large, magnificent—provided not only with the hours of the day, but with the months of the year, with a bell to tell the hour in the dark, and with all those other novel

appliances of the latest invention. I rather think that he showed the watch to me before I made any remark upon its size and beauty, and I think also he told me it was a present. I said I supposed it cost a hundred pounds, and he said a good deal more than that ; and there was a queer smile upon his face—the smile of a triumphant lover.

So he went on until June 8, 1885. On that morning, it will be remembered, after five years of constant and incessant opposition, we, in combination with the Tories, succeeded in beating the Government of Mr. Gladstone. Perhaps it will be worth my while to quote my description of this scene written at the time, as it exhibits Mr. Parnell at one of the most moving moments of his life. I quote from a sketch I wrote the next morning for the *Pall Mall Gazette* :—

"The wild, mad, strange scene which ended the sitting of the House between one and two o'clock this morning was ushered in with all those circumstances of the trivial and the dull and commonplace which portentous and tragic events usually start from. The atmosphere was suffocating, the speaking in the earlier part of the evening dreadfully dull, and the whole business had the air of forlorn weariness which heralds in foregone and not particularly important conclusions. When Sir Michael Hicks-Beach was speaking, it was the remark of more than one listener that the House looked as if nothing in all the world could rouse it to the heartiness of a cheer either of assent or derision; and the utter forlornness of its temper was shown by the stillness in which Sir Michael was allowed to proceed even by his own side. Though he spoke in a high-pitched voice, and with every evidence of effort, the solitary voice of Mr. Warton alone marked his path. That sound, raucous as the hoarse note of

the corncrake, nearly always unbends the humour of the Assembly but last night it passed without raising even the ripple of a laugh. The scene was made complete by a sight which belongs to all nights when the Conservative party is brought face to face with the dread necessity of filling up with the dread work of talking the interval between question time and the division after midnight. On all such occasions Mr Winn is to be seen passing round to his fellow-Conservatives ; a gentle insinuation in his voice, a small notebook in his hand, and a general air that somehow or other is irresistibly remindful of an elderly hen dealing with unruly or peculiarly vacuous chicks.

"Not even in the lobby was there any sign of particular excitement. The London correspondents had not assembled in any particular numbers in the earlier part of the evening ; and at night the lobby was a desert. There is a fatality about particularly dull nights, that while at the first it seems almost impossible to get speakers, there is a rush towards the end ; and the division becomes postponed in proportion to the eager anxiety to be over and have done with it. So it was last night. It was well after midnight before Mr. Childers had concluded a speech delivered amid more than the usual signs of languor ; and there was a certain sentiment of pity in the sight of Mr. Gladstone, pale and worn, compelled to remain long after his now usual hour in order to take part in the debate. When he rose up, he at once gave evidence of the fatigue under which he was labouring from prolonged vigil. His voice was feeble and his manner deprecatory; and the universal expectation was increased that he was about to give one of those lame and somewhat discursive speeches which occasionally remind the House that he has passed his threescore and ten. But he soon astonished everybody, and perhaps himself, by bursting into one of the brightest and most vivacious speeches he has delivered for many a day. There are those who even declared—though the statement is an exaggeration —that it was the best speech he ever delivered. Right and left he hammered his blows with abounding good-humour and an extravagance of ease that almost seemed to gloat in its own power of overwhelming puny and insensate opponents. The Prime Minister has a habit when he is in his best and most luxuriant mood of indulging in an amount of facial play that is absent from his ordinary

efforts. His eyebrows and his nose are puckered up after the manner of Mr. Irving in 'Louis XI.;' and there is a smile of exaggerated scorn about his whole face that makes the whole House laugh with, and to some extent laugh at, him. Several times he indulged in this last night. He was ready for all comers: instead of resenting interruption, he seemed to court it, and he often paused when there arose a slight whisper from the region below the gangway where sit Lord Randolph Churchill and Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett, apparently in the hope that he might have the opportunity of delivering one of those shafts that transfix the victim. But Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett had selected another part of the House; the rest of the Conservatives were dumb; and the only two occasions that presented themselves for the delight of the Prime Minister were once when Mr. W. H. O'Sullivan, who is one of the great authorities on whisky, interjected an interruption, and once when Lord Randolph Churchill ventured to whisper a word about sugar. Between Mr. Gladstone and Mr. O'Sullivan there was the interchange of a pleasant bit of badinage, the Prime Minister beaming in riotous good-humour; and the interruption of Lord Randolph Churchill drew from the Prime Minister one of the most effective of his many splendid and telling hits. He was speaking about the unpatriotic attitude of his opponents in challenging the Budget at a time when the country was face to face with such portentous difficulties; and, looking at Lord Randolph, he pointed at him with outstretched finger, and, with that strange wrinkling up of his face already noticed, he spoke of an Opposition 'which calls itself sometimes Conservative and sometimes the Tory Democracy.' Lord Randolph Churchill took off his hat and bowed in ironical acknowledgment of the allusion. To sum up, Mr. Gladstone thoroughly enjoyed himself, and the House thoroughly enjoyed Mr. Gladstone, and when he sat down Mr. Childers might be seen complimenting him highly; while the delighted face of Mr. Chamberlain, as he looked at his old chief luxuriantly sweeping away the arguments of the Tories, was even a stronger indication of the effect of the great orator. Still there was no excitement in the House, and the numbers were not watched with that crowding at doors which usually takes place when the result is uncertain. The different sides streamed quietly and a little wearily into the lobby, the Parnellites, as usual, joining

the Conservative Opposition. Nor in the Conservative division lobby was there any excitement while the division was proceeding. There was no expectation anywhere of a Government defeat. It was only as the division was approaching its end that some suspicion of the truth began to dawn upon the Tories. At once a state of unusual and fierce excitement supervened. Lord Randolph Churchill was particularly vehement. It was seen that the stream from the Government lobby was getting thinner and thinner, while that from the Opposition was still flowing in full tide; and each successive Tory, as he got into the House, was almost torn to pieces as he was asked what was his number. There were hoarse whispers, and eager demands, and a slight and tremulous cheer. But it was too soon as yet to give way to a joy that might be premature. At last certainty began to come in thickening signs. Lord Kensington walked to the table from the Government lobby, and stated the numbers to the clerk. This was almost decisive, as it showed the exhaustion of the numbers of the Government; and here were the Conservatives still coming in. The number of the Government was now known to be 252, and the great question was whether the Conservatives had beaten this. It was soon known that 252 had been beaten, and then the floodgates were opened. Lord Randolph Churchill was the leader of the uproar; and Gavroche celebrating a victory at the barricades, or an Eton boy triumphing over success at football, could not have been more juvenile in the extravagance of his joy. He took off his hat and began to wave it madly, and soon he had actually got up and was standing on his seat, and from this point of vantage kept waving his hat. Some younger Tories sitting beside him imitated this mad example, and waved their hats. The Parnellites, meantime, kept silence, having delivered so many blows that just stopped short. But when the paper was handed to Mr. Winn, the Parnellites felt secure, and burst out into a deep, wild note of triumph. 'Coercion!' 'Buckshot!' 'Spencer!' and in one solitary instance 'Myles Joyce!' rose from their thick and excited ranks; their self-controlled leader did not join in the cries, but his pale face was a trifle paler, and there was a happy smile upon it. Throughout all this mad tumult—one of the maddest ever seen in the House of Commons—Mr. Gladstone remained outwardly un-

troubled, unheeding, even unhearing. He sat in his usual seat with his despatch to the Queen in the portfolio on his knees, writing apparently with undisturbed swiftness the account of his own defeat. He never once looked up.

"At last the numbers were told: then more wild cheering; and then the dull, heavy, and inarticulate voice of Sir Erskine May recalling the House from its passionate heights of tragedy to the Orders of the Day. But the descent was too sudden, and would not be allowed. There were loud and deafening shouts of interruption and protest; and at last it was evident that the Government would not be allowed to escape without giving some evidence and confession of its defeat. Mr. Gladstone rose. He had his despatch to the Queen and the portfolio in his hand, and his face was quiet, and just a trifle sad and meek. There was a burst of enthusiastic cheers from his followers. It was answered by the loud shouts of triumph from the other side, and the storm went on for minutes, cheer answering cheer, and exclamations answering exclamations. Mr. Gladstone stood calm amid it all. He looked at his despatch; and, when the tumult grew loudest, even affected to cross its t's and dot its i's. At one time, it seemed as if he would have to sit down without a word; but at last he was allowed to move the adjournment of the House. Then there were more cheers; and the House began to slowly empty. And then it was that the most touching event of the night occurred. The House had half emptied; Mr. Gladstone and Lord Richard Grosvenor were standing up, talking to each other. Lord Richard as senior Liberal Whip, had, of course, the main responsibility for the disaster of the night. Between him and Mr. Gladstone there is, as is known, a strong and deep attachment. The Prime Minister shook his faithful friend and follower by the hand. Everybody who saw the incident noted and was touched by it, and interpreted its plain meaning—'I forgive, and—farewell.'"

And so we reached the General Election of 1885. The Franchise had been in the meantime reduced, and it was clear that we were going to sweep the country. Mr. Parnell's leadership had

risen higher and higher, and grown stronger and stronger until he stood at the very apex of a united nation. For a while, he shook off the torpor that had grown upon him for years. We went over to Dublin together to make the preparations for the fight, and together we attended the meeting of the National League. Before I close this chapter, let me tell a small incident that throws a considerable light on his character. There had been a meeting of the party, and there had been some rough and tumble discussion between two members, with sharp tongues and irritable, though not malignant tempers. Parnell had taken no part whatever in the controversy, except to throw in a word now and then by way of alleviating its somewhat rugged tone. We had to attend a dinner that night, and the meeting was very prolonged. Nevertheless, with that craving for companionship which he always had when he was away from England, he asked me to go to his hotel. Though it was within half-an-hour of the time of the dinner which threatened to be of bounteous amplitude, he rang the bell immediately and called for a cup of tea; he explained to me that he was completely unnerved by the squabble he had just witnessed, and that he required the tea to steady him.

At the dinner he delivered a confident speech, and wound up with a confident prophecy as to the future. The prophecy was in language

almost exaggerated, and to me, who had seen him unnerved a few hours before, there was a startling contrast between the two sides of the man, exhibited at such short intervals. But it was due to the hideous contrast between his outward and inner life. A great and assured public position; the coming triumph of his cause; the love of a great party; the worship of a whole race—this was one side of his life. On the other side was a guilty secret, which every hour might reveal, which was in the hands of a man whose friendship was held by the insecurest of tenures, and the explosion of whose hatred would be, when it came, cunning, well-planted and deadly.

CHAPTER VII.

THE GALWAY ELECTION.

THE enemy was certainly pursuing him closely at this moment; and without much mercy. When he and I went over to Dublin to take part in the meetings which were to discuss the different candidatures, Captain O'Shea accompanied us. One of the mysteries to the Irish party was the close friendship which seemed to exist between men so different in every respect. I remember hearing with surprise Mr. Parnell remonstrating with Captain O'Shea upon a vote he had neglected to give, with the kindly firmness of an elder brother reproving a younger. How could Mr. Parnell be interested in any vote that Captain O'Shea gave? That gentleman belonged to a section that was particularly obnoxious to Mr. Parnell's supporters and friends: he was one of the gentlemen who had sat on the Liberal side, even through the terrible times when Liberals were coercing Ireland and imprisoning men by the hundred, Mr. Parnell among the number. If these Home Rulers—the nominal Home Rulers, as Mr. Gladstone once

called them—had stood by their colleagues, and by the cause they had pledged themselves to support, we could have turned out the Gladstone Government several times during the years between 1880 and 1885; and to turn out the Gladstone Government at that time was the chief business of an Irish party and the best thing for Ireland. Mr. Parnell's supporters then looked on those men as pledge-breakers and traitors, who had betrayed the confidence of the country, postponed her liberties for at least a Parliament; and their expulsion from public life was regarded as a sacred duty. I cannot say that to the general body of the Irish Members Captain O'Shea was more personally obnoxious than the rest of the "nominal" Home Rulers; but with one or two—I was not of the number—he was especially unpopular. Of these, Mr. Biggar and Mr. Healy were most conspicuous. Captain O'Shea's apparently close relations with Mr. Chamberlain—his acceptance of the part of intermediary in the Kilmainham Treaty between the Government and Mr. Parnell, made him be regarded as a more confirmed and a more dangerous Whig than even the general body. During this journey, a momentary absence from the carriage gave Mr. Parnell the opportunity of enabling me to see the purpose of this trip together.

"I suppose," he said, with his deprecatory smile so common when he was in a difficulty, "the party would not accept O'Shea for Clare again?"

I answered that, of course, there was not the smallest chance of their doing so. I was unpleasantly struck by the inquiry, and also alarmed. It seemed to confirm the disquieting rumours as to Parnell being in this man's power.

I heard no more of Captain O'Shea until I went to the Scotland division of Liverpool, for which I had been requested by Mr. Parnell and my colleagues to stand. But there was a circumstance that somewhat disquieted me, which afterwards I placed in association with Mr. Parnell's relations to Captain O'Shea. It is known that at the Election of 1885, the Irish party called on the Irish voters in England to go against the Liberal candidates. This is not, as I have said several times, a work of political controversy; and, accordingly, I do not stop to discuss the wisdom or unwisdom of this course; but though most of my colleagues and myself had made up our minds that this was the wise course to adopt: though the Irish population in England for the most part panted for the opportunity to strike a blow against the party that had given us five years of Coercion: and though Mr. Parnell himself always seemed to lean to the opinion, that the support of the Conservatives would bring about that pretty close balance of English parties which would make the Irish party omnipotent—in spite of all this, I could not get any decisive opinion from Mr. Parnell until the last moment. It may be that he already

had some indications of the change in the views of Mr. Gladstone; it may be that he was undecided between the promises of support he had from Lord Carnarvon and the possibilities from the Liberal party. But the fact was, he refused to give his final judgment. I afterwards thought that the hesitation was in some degree due to his unfortunate position in regard to Captain O'Shea. However, at last the decision could be postponed no longer. I took to him to the rooms of the National League, at Westminster, the manifesto which has been since so often quoted, and which I had written in the white heat of electioneering excitement and of the fierce struggle with the Liberal party of the previous five years. He made no alteration whatever, except that in two places where I spoke of Liberals, he added the words "and Radicals," lest there should be any doubt in the minds of the Irish electors as to the universality of the ban under which we were resolved to place the followers of Mr. Gladstone. But though he made changes so few, there was a hesitancy about him—an appearance of internal struggle—which was somewhat surprising and disquieting.

When I got to Liverpool, a stranger thing came at once to my knowledge. For some reason or other, I found that Mr. Parnell had resolved to have three Liverpool seats contested. There was not the smallest chance for the return of the

Nationalist candidate except in one. As president of the National League, as candidate for Liverpool, as responsible for the Irish vote in Great Britain, Liverpool was my natural head-quarters; but it struck me as strange that Mr. Parnell should have chosen the same place, with all Ireland to be attended to, and the great fight coming on there. I was, of course, glad to see him; I never felt otherwise than happy in his company. A greater surprise was in store for me. The three Irish candidates were Mr. John Redmond, for the Kirkdale division; Mr. Parnell himself for the Exchange division; and I for the Scotland division. To the surprise and bewilderment of everybody, Mr. Parnell retired from the contest for the Exchange division at the last moment. By some occult means, the first chosen Liberal candidate—Mr. Stephen—was also induced to retire; and without any previous warning, Captain O'Shea was put forward as the Liberal candidate.

Here, then, we had the extraordinary spectacle of Mr. Parnell denouncing the Liberal candidates throughout all England—with the exception of a few men that had stood by us in our darkest hours—approving a document which denounced them in terms of red-hot vehemence, himself beginning the English campaign with the statement that the success of Liberals would mean the giving over of Ireland to chains and slavery,—I believe there were even stronger expressions,—and

yet supporting a candidate who was a Whig of the Whigs, without the excuse of the English Whig in his nationality and his party ties. It was still more astonishing to see the perfectly frenzied efforts which Mr. Parnell made to return this candidate of all others. He spoke dozens of times; went to see everybody whom he could hope to influence, and who was supposed to have any power of helping Captain O'Shea; was ubiquitous, persuasive, pathetically appealing to everybody to help in the return of Captain O'Shea. The Irishmen looked on in wonder, some in disgust but loyal, affectionate, with blind faith in the patriotism and sagacity of their great leader, they obeyed his impulse and worked as hard for Captain O'Shea as if their confidence in him were as great as their distrust.

But it was in vain. Cruel destiny brought Captain O'Shea within a few votes of victory; but he was not victorious. Mr. Parnell must have been bitterly disappointed, but he concealed his feelings; and that night he delivered one of the most extraordinary utterances of his life—an utterance that marked the high tension and the lofty hope to which he had reached. Standing in the League Hall—that building in which most Irish meetings take place in Liverpool—face to face with a meeting packed with a suffocating density, mad with hope, triumphant vengeance, enthusiastic in devotion—he was swept away by

their enthusiasm. The hideous abyss—the squalid and ugly tragedy—that threatened him—was forgotten ; and he rose to the majesty and might of the occasion. The reporters had gone. With flashing eyes, with that hoarse note that came into his voice at rare moments of passion, he gave the audience a fascinating glimpse into those awful depths of resolution and passion which lay in the silent and dark recesses of his soul.

"Ireland," he said, "has been knocking at the English door long enough with kid gloves; I tell the English people to beware, and be wise in time. Ireland will soon throw off the kid gloves, and she will knock with a *mailed hand*." And as he uttered the last terrible words, he moved his clenched fist as though he were literally knocking at England's portals. The audience caught the mad enthusiasm of the moment, arose as one man, and shouted itself hoarse.

But the ugly spectre came back. Surely, however, if smiling and glorious fortune could lay it, there was that in Parnell's position at that moment to send it shrieking into space. The world had just learned that the greatest of Englishmen—the leader of the always triumphant party—had been brought to share the same views as to the government of Ireland as Mr. Parnell, and that in a few weeks' time the long dream of centuries was about to be realized, the hour of Ireland's liberation and resurrection to strike.

What centuries of battle, thousands of scaffolds, what Flood had failed to achieve and Grattan to maintain, the dream which with O'Connell ended not in liberty, but in a hideous famine and a million deaths—all this Parnell was about to see accomplished by the might and skill of his hand.

However, the ugly consequences of men's acts are not reasoned away by the exigencies of dramatic appropriateness nor by the piteous pleas of even the happiness and the secular hopes of a nation. And one night I learned to my amazement, that Mr. Parnell was about to expose the dazzling hopes of his nation—the splendid triumphs of his genius—to disastrous shipwreck. I had been returned for Galway—which I represented for five years—as well as for Liverpool, at the election. I had chosen Liverpool, and now the time came for the selection of my successor in Galway. I asked Mr. Parnell day after day to discuss the question. I told him that I was in the receipt of letters and telegrams from my supporters in Galway, and I represented the position in which I was being placed, in having either to leave these communications unanswered, or answered in terms of evasion. But he put me off; told me—if I remember rightly—to countermand a meeting that had been called to select the candidate. At last, one night, standing outside the House of Commons, on the pavement at the chief gate of entrance into Palace Yard, he revealed the purpose he had been

keeping back: he intended to propose Captain O'Shea for Galway.

I was dumbfounded! I protested; but protest was vain, and I saw that Mr. Parnell had formed one of those grim resolves which I knew, from previous experience, no power on earth could shake.

If the support of Captain O'Shea as a Liberal candidate for an English seat were strange, his nomination for an Irish seat was appalling. We had just elected a party bound together by the solemn pledge to sit, act, and vote together; to be independent of all English parties; to fight for Home Rule without any reward but the confidence of the Irish people: and here was a man proposed who would not take any of those pledges; who was an ally, if not a member, of the Liberal party; who would not sit, or vote, or act with us.

I rushed to find Biggar. He had gone to bed at the Hotel Métropole, where he was then living. He jumped out of bed when I told him what Mr. Parnell had said, and heard the proposal with indignation and the determination at once to resist it. I telegraphed to Dublin; got a reply that showed the feeling there was as distracted as my own, and was asked to come over at once. The next day Biggar and I started for Ireland.

On the journey I met Mr. John Redmond, and discussed the situation with him. As we spoke, my fluctuating thoughts and resolves took shape;

and they came to this: If Mr. Parnell pinned himself publicly to the support of Captain O'Shea then it became a question of his leadership; and as his leadership, and the national and racial as well as party unity which it symbolised, were then the chief hope of the coming proposal of Home Rule, everything was to be sacrificed to that, and even the lesser evil of Captain O'Shea's election was to be accepted; but if Mr. Parnell had not publicly declared for Captain O'Shea, things in Galway were to be brought to such a point as to show him that Captain O'Shea's election was impossible, and that he had better not propose it. This resolve ultimately came to this narrow point: Would or would not the *Freeman's Journal* of the next morning announce the candidature of Captain O'Shea and Mr. Parnell's approval of it?

It can be imagined with what anxiety we rushed to get a copy of the journal that was to solve this dreadful problem. A look settled the question. There, in a small, brief, sub-leader, was the fateful announcement. Captain O'Shea was standing for Galway, and the *Freeman's Journal* understood that his candidature had the approval of Mr. Parnell. We went to the Imperial Hotel, where Mr. William O'Brien was living. Foolish and fanatical supporters of Mr. Parnell have not scrupled to attack Mr. O'Brien vehemently for his refusal to support Mr. Parnell in his recent struggle. What happened on this occasion will be an answer.

He listened to what we had to say, and his reply was: "I had rather blow out my brains than have any responsibility for interfering at this moment with the leadership of Mr. Parnell." From him we went to the house of Mr. Healy, and soon discovered that the terrible crisis had caused intense excitement and alarm among all our colleagues; that they had all been up till four or five in the morning, discussing this grave difficulty in all its many and equally hideous lights. It was as though we lived in one of those Italian towns which is ever threatened by the volcano, and, after years of anguish and awful expectation, had at last woke up to find the rush of the overwhelming lava-tide upon us.

Healy's voice was for war; and he and Mr. Biggar went down to Galway by the first train. They were met by an excited crowd; found that the news of this portentous candidature had shaken the town to its very depths, and had created a frenzy of indignant remonstrance. The speeches which were immediately made, did not tend to allay the excitement; and, in short, Galway was a pandemonium. And meantime that wide Irish world—extending over a space so vast, separated by oceans and continents—had already begun to show that thrilling responsiveness of nerve by which it is united; American correspondents telegraphed hourly for interviews, telling that New York had gone mad over what was occurring

in Galway, and asking for some explanation for the thunderbolt which had thus suddenly broke from a sky radiant a moment before with the brightness of Ireland's coming dawn. The days which followed were full of agony. From all parts came the members of the party; consultations went on all day without interruption, were pursued night after night until the dawn came to interrupt them. Telegrams were sent to Galway, to Healy, to Biggar; and to London, to Parnell. From Galway, too, the news became every hour more serious. The speeches of Mr. Healy and Mr. Biggar were heard by the whole town with frantic applause: a candidate had been found in opposition to Captain O'Shea, in the person of Mr. Lynch —an honest, sturdy, incorruptible Nationalist of the type that had made Mr. Parnell and his movement.

At first no answer could be got from Parnell. Hour followed hour in awful suspense. There was always the feeling among his intimates about Parnell—as I have previously said—that he might any day end in tragedy; and then the morning came, and still there was no reply from him, and he made no appearance. The most sinister apprehensions took possession of his friends. I need scarcely say that the difficulty of communication with Mr. Parnell was vastly increased by the ignorance of all of us of a private address that would find him. We could only think of the Parliamentary offices in Palace Chambers, where we knew he occasionally dropped in.

At last, as Mr. Healy and Mr. Biggar would not return from Galway, and as the election of Captain O'Shea had now come to involve the leadership of Mr. Parnell, we resolved to issue such a pledge of support to Mr. Parnell as would enable him to bear down all opposition; an address of confidence was prepared, signatures were sought and obtained by telegram; every member of the party with scarcely an exception signed it; it was published in the *Freeman's Journal*, and it was communicated to Mr. Parnell. Immediately the difficulties and delays of communication ceased, he responded promptly, announcing that he would be over the next morning.

That was a strange journey, the journey to Galway that morning. I had greatly hesitated whether I should go. To help in forcing Captain O'Shea on the constituency that had given me its confidence for five years was a task I did not relish, and I feared that Mr. Parnell, attributing the whole difficulty to my warnings to the men in Dublin, would not care to see me. But he sent me a message by Mr. Harrington that he would be very glad if I would accompany him. My colleagues represented to me that any influence I might have in Galway would be useful in putting an end to the strife that threatened to ruin all, and thinking the duty the more sacred, because of its unpleasantness, I consented to go.

Mr. Parnell had resolved to go on to Galway

without stopping in Dublin beyond the interval between the arrival of the Kingstown and the start of the first Galway train. "I'm rather hard to start," he said, with a smile, "but when I do, I keep on." I do not know whether I was surprised more by his manner and appearance or by his reception. He was perfectly collected and tranquil, and his reception was as cordial as though the old terms of friendship had never been interrupted. And then we started: Mr. Parnell, Mr. Sexton, Mr. O'Kelly, Mr. Campbell, and myself.

I promised at an earlier page that I would say something of the religious opinions of Mr. Parnell. It will, perhaps, strike the reader that this is a somewhat singular moment for mentioning that subject; he will see the reason presently. Let me first say that once I had read a statement in a paper, that Mr. Parnell had once been a regular attendant at a chapel belonging to the Plymouth Brethren. He had been brought up as an Episcopalian, and was a regular subscriber to the small church in Rathdrum, the town next Avondale, and had at one time held the office of Synodsman. The Plymouth Brethren, therefore, seemed to be a somewhat unlikely form of sect to attract him. I asked him—this was long before the Galway episode—whether the statement was true; he did not give me a direct answer, but remarked that there was something very attractive about the quietude of their worship. I afterwards learned that his relative, the second Lord Congleton,

had been one of the leaders, if not the head of the sect. On another railway journey, religion had turned up as a topic of discussion, and Parnell avowed his disbelief in the Old Testament. He did not do so arrogantly or offensively, but in his usual quiet way. And now, again, on this journey to Galway, under such circumstances as I have described, religion once more was discussed. To the surprise of everybody, Parnell said that he had faith in religion ; that he once had lost it, but that it had come back again. "I believe," he added, "in the religion I was born in."

Some trepidation was natural as to the kind of reception Galway was preparing for us; but if Parnell felt any, he did not show it. The reception was much worse than we could have anticipated in our gloomiest forecast. The large railway platform was impassable, with a wild, excited, terrible crowd, shouting furiously, wildly hostile to Captain O'Shea ; ready to drink the blood—figuratively—of anybody who came to support him. A man struck at me ; Parnell was not assailed, except with words of remonstrance; but he was caught up in the whirl of the dense crowd, and he was dragged rather than walked to the hotel on the station. And now two things come back to me from that awful moment. Among those who came to meet Mr. Parnell was Captain O'Shea. He was dressed very carefully—as usual—and his face was as white as the stiffly-

starched collar he wore. He made a desperate attempt to reach Parnell, and to take his hand, and otherwise advertise himself as Parnell's friend and protegé. Parnell, meantime, was not forgetful of his friends. He and I had got separated; he deliberately pushed his way back and took my arm; if I was going to be attacked, at least he would be there to help me. I told that little story a short time afterwards to somebody who said Parnell was selfish, as a resistless proof of the native chivalry, and courage, and thoughtfulness of his character.

At last we were inside the hotel, outside were the shouting crowd; and Mr. Lynch, who is an excitable and high-tempered man, could be heard addressing them in vehement language and in strong denunciation of Captain O'Shea and of Mr. Parnell for supporting him. Mr. Parnell, meantime, had quietly gone upstairs to his bedroom. He was to have the conference with Mr. Healy and Mr. Biggar, which was to decide his whole fate; but he was not going to enter it with the stains of night and travel upon him. In a few moments he came down, clean, well-combed, with his scanty hair brushed smooth over his head, and absolutely self-possessed. We sat around: Mr. Healy towards the centre; Mr. Biggar standing up restless, but also as calm as Parnell, and though determined to fight to the bitter end, with a smile on his face that showed a

sublime unconsciousness or carelessness of the awful realities around. Biggar was a strange mixture of love for Parnell and hatred for such doings as this election and such companionship as that of Captain O'Shea. More fearless and more unimaginative than even Parnell, he could go through scenes of appalling danger, of awful tragedy, without trepidation—even without consciousness. Somebody asked him on the morning of that dread day how Parnell should be received. "Mob him, of course," he replied; and then he knocked the top of his egg, and continued calmly the ample breakfast he always ate.

Healy stated his case with profound emotion; with palpable evidence of the struggle between his old-time affection for Parnell and his sense of the duty of the hour. Parnell listened calmly; never interrupting. Then, in his reply, he used one phrase that showed his genius and character, and that at once swept Healy off his feet. There had been some talk of his resigning his position if Captain O'Shea was not accepted by the party. "I have no intention of resigning my position," he replied. "I would not resign it if the people of Galway were to kick me through the streets to-day." He said this fateful sentence quietly, without brag; perhaps even with the suggestion of the sadness of the man tied by imperative duty to the stake. Healy was conquered. He afterwards said that in these words Parnell spoke like a patriot, and that

these were the words which induced him to withdraw his opposition. But Biggar, made of more unyielding stuff, with a soul incapable of the stormy sweeps of emotion that rush over a nature passionate and imaginative, and, at bottom, tender, like Healy's—was still for fighting it out. There was a dreadful moment, when everybody feared that Biggar was going to repeat before Mr. Parnell's face the frightful things he had been saying all over the town about Captain O'Shea and Mr. Parnell; and Healy, excited, jumped to his feet and shook his fist in Mr. Biggar's face, lest he should put this insult on Parnell. Biggar, who was wax to those he loved, smiled in the most good-humoured way, and went on; he had not thought of saying what everybody was expecting.

Then Mr. Lynch was called in. It was explained that Mr. Healy and Mr. Biggar had resolved to withdraw their opposition to Captain O'Shea; and we went down to the public meeting, at which the decision of the people was finally to be taken.

Never did Parnell appear greater than at that moment. It was a crowd to appal any man with less iron nerve. It shouted, and raged, and could scarcely be got to hear in patience a word from even the mighty leader in favour of such a candidate as Captain O'Shea. And then, Parnell knew the fatal issues that depended on the vote of these exasperated and maddened men, and he had to

fight this unequal conflict with the guilty secret locked up in his bosom which the world has since learned ; but his courage and power rose to the height of the occasion. Those who think that Parnell was a bad speaker should have heard him on that day ; those who declare that his power was overrated should have been there to see him on that narrow, swaying platform of rough timber in that little tumble-down hall. I cannot give the words of the whole speech : it was never reported ; but there are one or two sentences which I remember. "I have," he said—he was speaking some time before the introduction of Mr. Gladstone's Bill—"have a Parliament for College Green within the hollow of my hand." There was a thrill of excitement in the crowd, which, up to this, had heard nothing of the still, secret purposes of the great English Minister. Still more awe-striking was the sentence in which he wound up the effect of the rejection of Captain O'Shea on this glorious and intoxicating prospect. "There will rise a shout," he said, "from all the enemies of Ireland, 'Parnell is beaten ; Ireland has no longer a leader.'"

It is impossible to describe the effect of those words on the audience. You could almost hear the shudder of emotion which they felt. Enough ; Parnell had awed them into silence ; into grudging and hateful obedience : it was one of the most complete subjugations of a crowd in history. A

speech from William O'Brien — whose intense sincerity and courage everybody in the crowd knew—finished what Mr. Parnell had begun; the struggle was over; Captain O'Shea was accepted; and Parnell was once more the undisputed leader of a united party and nation.

One of the evenings which followed this day showed Parnell in a curious light. He had consented to support Captain O'Shea, and most faithfully he carried out the bond. He spoke at meetings; superintended all the arrangements for scrutineers, polling and counting officers; saw to everything. But—so far as I knew—he had no communication with Captain O'Shea; if he did, it was not in the presence of any of his own friends. He stopped at the Railway Hotel; Captain O'Shea was at Black's. In public and in private he acknowledged how severe was the strain he had put on the people and on his comrades. To Mr. O'Brien he said, with feeling, that he would never put his party to such a strain again. But, on the evening to which I allude, he made no concealment of his real views. I remarked that he was more cheerful than I had seen him for many a long day. It seemed as though a great load had been removed from his back—the heavier because invisible to any eye but his own. He literally beamed; and never had I seen him, since the early days, so soft, gentle, communicative.

The remark was made that the priests had

supported Captain O'Shea. He occasionally complained that the priests had not helped him as much as they should at the beginning of his struggles; and perhaps this coloured his observation. This is what he said: "It is curious how they always support the less desirable candidate." When this observation provoked a smile, he added that he had used the word deliberately. Then the talk turned on the future of Ireland; he spoke with a hopefulness, broad, long, far-stretching, which showed that he contemplated continuing the direction of Irish affairs as long as the long life he anticipated, lasted; and for a long time after she had begun her new life as a self-governed country. There was no vista too far, too sunny, too fortunate, for the gaze of his eyes on this night of buoyant happiness. He seemed to feel as though he had laid a spectre, and was celebrating the exultant first hour of his release.

CHAPTER VIII.

REACHING THE ZENITH.

BUT he was wrong: the spectre was not laid. It may now be seen clearly that the Galway Election —that extraordinary triumph which made even the enemies of Parnell regard him with the mysterious horror of the man that had Destiny under his thumb—was the beginning of the end. To Captain O'Shea it brought apparently neither profit nor satisfaction.

The election was mentioned a few days afterwards by Lord Randolph Churchill in terms of bitter comment. The hideous sayings of Biggar had been carried by busy and swift rumour to the House of Commons. Further, it was stated that, in the stress of the struggle, Captain O'Shea had promised to sit with the Irish party—that is to say, on the benches in opposition to the Liberal party, with which he was allied. Captain O'Shea, either because he did not wish to so compromise himself, or because he was embittered and chagrined by the incidents of the election, wandered about the

galleries of the House; and, finally, when the division came on the great Bill which was to give Ireland freedom, walked out of the House, From this time forward, there were no signs of any of the old relations between him and Mr. Parnell; and a few years afterwards, the hatred of Captain O'Shea had become with Mr. Parnell one of those terrible passions that dominated his soul.

But whatever were his private troubles, Mr. Parnell's public fortunes were in the ascendant. I do not know of my own knowledge what took place on the fateful days when the Home Rule Bill was in preparation; but I believe that Mr. Parnell was consulted about its main provisions. Those who were settling the great national contract with him must have found in him one of the hardest and grimmest of bargainers. In making a political "deal," Mr. Parnell always reminded me of an Irish peasant fighting over the price of a cow; he was just as hard-fisted. Nor was there anything in him to appeal to, as in other men. He was, on such occasions, as cold as though he was of stone; had the extraordinarily high sense of his own rights, or the rights of his cause, which is so useful in those contests in which the personal character of the contracting parties is always so important a factor. Neither pity, nor imagination, nor veneration could have the slightest influence on him.

I do not know that he ever really loved Mr.

Gladstone; possibly he had never forgotten the imprisonment in Kilmainham. He once spoke to me—but I must add it was years before the Home Rule Bill—as if he never would forget it, and would, in his own day, avenge it.

But he must have been a difficult man to deal with, anyhow, because, with all his caution, the effect of his daring temperament, his narrowness, and his confidence in his own rights, was to lead him more than once into the grossest miscalculations. However, in dealing with Mr. Gladstone, he had not to deal—as he thought, perhaps—with a trickster, anxious to give a little for as much as he could extort. Mr. Gladstone, having come to the conclusion that Home Rule was necessary, knew that to be of any use to Ireland, or to England either, it must be complete, and on a momentous occasion afterwards, he spoke with warm gratitude of the helpfulness and consideration of Mr. Parnell in their political dealings.

This was a moment of magnificent triumph for Parnell. People then saw, with amazement and almost stupefaction, a sight which has since ceased to be wonderful by the force of familiarity. But in 1886 it was all fresh, and the whole world could only view with a gasp, and almost a shudder, that the Irish leader—who once had gone into the division-lobby with six, five, three, two, other men—who had been a prisoner—whom the British press, of

all parties, had ridiculed, denounced, loaded with every epithet of contempt, reprobation, and hatred —whom a great Englishman had almost called murderer a few years before, amid the frantic cheers of men of all parties—that this man was leading at his triumphant chariot-wheels, the greatest of the conquering race and the most powerful of the conqueror's political parties. But it was strictly in accord with Parnell's character, that at this moment of dazzling triumph, he should have borne himself more modestly than at any other time, with even a greater desire for self-suppression and for obscurity. Always, it must be said of him, he cared much more for the realities of victory than for their outward show and flattering celebration. Throughout these days, he seemed to select clothes that would make him look the most undistinguished of men. His habitual dress was a light-coloured, rough, cheap, and well-worn tweed suit, and he wore a soft, shapeless hat, such as a man might wear in the smoking-room of a steamboat. Thus clothed—I might almost say, thus disguised—he would steal into his place in the House of Commons; sit there, silent and unobtrusive; hidden rather behind the forms of his colleagues than standing forth from them. To understand how much all this meant, one ought to try and imagine the figure other members of the House of Commons would cut if they had been placed in a position of similarly grand triumph. It was things

like these that accounted for the profound affection, and respect, and trust in Parnell that lay athwart all the impatience and heart-burnings, and sometimes awe, which his acts and conduct inspired. "There!" I heard Mr. O'Brien say once, "he came in that hour of triumph quietly into the House, and nobody could tell from his demeanour that he was more important than the humblest member of his party."

In the last nine months Mr. Parnell repudiated the Home Rule Bill of 1886; but never had a man more single or undivided responsibility for a measure. He never consulted any of his colleagues except individually, and by questions, apparently casual, during the consultations that preceded its final shape. It was not till the night of April 7 that he called a few of us together in the Westminster Palace Hotel, and explained the main provisions. The immediate verdict was that the Bill was one which the Irish people could cordially accept. I recall, too, another circumstance which showed how strong he was for the Bill. It will be remembered that a final effort was made to save the measure by hanging it up until the autumn Session, after it had passed the Second Reading. Some of the Unionists still shrank back from the final breach with their party, and indicated that their objection was not to the principle but to the details of Mr. Gladstone's measure. In the hope of paving the way for such a truce, in the belief

that a postponement would turn out to be a gain to Mr. Gladstone and to Home Rule, I ventured, after consultation with some friends—not with Mr. Parnell, for consultation with him was one of the impossibilities—to throw out the hint that the Bill should be considered rather as a draft measure than one whose final shape was fixed. Mr. Parnell sat beside me while I spoke. I could see, when I sat down, that he was not altogether pleased. He said he did not like the passage in which I had referred to the Bill as not necessarily in its final shape. "*This!*" he said, "is the Bill we want"; laying special stress on the "this." It looked as if his sense of paternity were even stronger and less yielding than Mr. Gladstone's.

The result of the General Election was a surprise to him, and this was one of the occasions on which he showed that miscalculation to which I have already referred. During the Session of 1886, I spoke to him of the possibility of the defeat of the Bill, and of an immediate appeal to the country. "I view that prospect," he said, "with perfect equanimity." In the new Parliament he took very little part; and he became more and more of a recluse. The old geniality and comradeship were revived in the election of 1885, but then died out, and never to my knowledge were really kindled again. He became, too, more suspicious, and jealousy, for the first time, in a mean and petty form, began to show itself. I

shall never forget my feelings on the night of the Eighty Club dinner, when he made an attack on Mr. Dillon and the Plan of Campaign. Mr. Dillon was to be tried either the next day or the day after, by two of Mr. Balfour's magistrates, and the speech of Mr. Parnell was almost an invitation to these gentlemen to convict, and to give a lengthened sentence to him. Such a speech, if made by any other Irishman, would have swept him out of existence in the whirlwind of hatred, which "felon-setting" has always brought forth, but Parnell could apparently do anything, and not only remain scathless, but gain strength.

At last a blow fell upon him which for a moment seemed to threaten his existence. Everybody now knows the whole story of the Pigott forgery. A few moments after I saw it, I received a request from Mr. Stead to go to the *Pall Mall Gazette* office; I at once declared it a forgery. We met in the House that day to discuss the new Coercion Bill, in whose interest, as it was afterwards confessed, the letter of Pigott was published, and, of course, there was no Parnell. We had grown so accustomed to this kind of thing, that the supreme importance of the occasion made us expect that he would certainly be absent. However, after the sitting had opened, and when Mr. Sexton was already in the midst of a speech, he entered, quietly and unobtrusively as was his custom. He sat next Mr. McCarthy; whispered to him, Mr.

McCarthy just whispered to Mr. Sexton, and with the extraordinary readiness and resource for which that marvellous Parliamentarian is remarkable, Mr. Sexton at once came out in the middle of his current sentence, with the word "forgery." The burst of fierce cheers with which the Irishmen received the word, can well be imagined.

Mr. Parnell did not, I always thought, act wisely in the first days of this attack. For instance, he went laboriously to prove by calling attention to the tail of this word and the head of that, that the handwriting was not his—a style of criticism that allowed easy retort; the proper thing to do was to simply affirm that the letter was a forgery and to leave it there. How much he was disturbed by the attack was shown by a circumstance which the world has not learned until now. He went over to Avondale with his secretary, Mr. Campbell, examined his correspondence and his cheques for years; scrutinising his signature, in order to find proofs of the forgery. It seems so ridiculous now that he should ever have had to resort to such laborious expedients to prove the falsity of a document, the dishonesty of which stood so palpable on its very face. The vulgar language, the reckless want of caution, the bad spelling, the inverted and clumsy phraseology—everything would have shown to any man not blinded by the insanity of party passion, that the document could never have proceeded from such a man as Mr.

Parnell. To those of us who knew him well, too, there was besides the evidence of all his habits that he could never have written such a letter. He was constantly asked for his autograph ; it was significant of his suspiciousness and caution that, long years before the forgery of the *Times* was born, he always signed a letter in such a way as to make it impossible for anybody to write in anything over his name.

I need not go through the well-worn story of the *Times* Commission, it is still too recent. I shall only give one or two side-lights which may not be familiar to the public. Mr. George Lewis has had many strange clients in his extraordinary career, but assuredly he never had such a client as Mr. Parnell. That gentleman would insist on doing his own work, and there are strange, weird tales of the great statesman, the potent leader, the proud dictator, hanging furtively round low dens at night, in the hope of finding a clue to the conspiracy against him. For a long time he was convinced that the blow had been aimed by Captain O'Shea. At this period, his hatred for that gentleman had grown almost to a monomania, and he saw his hand in everything. When Parnell got hold of an idea of this kind, it was impossible to root it out ; the more absurd it was the more obstinately he held to it ; and the suspicion certainly was absurd. Captain O'Shea did do his best to help out Pigott in the witness box, as will presently be seen ; but

I do not believe that he even knew Pigott before the days of the forgery.

People wondered very much that Mr. Parnell was absent from the court on the day when Pigott's cross-examination broke up, under circumstances of such dramatic excitement, the conspiracy against him; it was late in the day when he entered the court, and then he gave a very hasty glance at the unhappy and desperate wretch whose writhings in the box, whose purple face, whose whole air, beaten, hopeless, abashed, was a sight that, in me at least, excited pity rather than the glee of triumph. It will not surprise the reader that Mr. Parnell should be absent from any occasion, but probably the explanation in this instance was very simple. He did not especially hate Pigott; it was not Pigott that he wished to get at and to strike down, and therefore, he was neither very excited nor very triumphant, nor, indeed, very much interested. If you wanted to see the real feelings of Parnell, the real object of his hatred, the demeanour of the man when the depths of his soul were really stirred, you should have been in the court when Captain O'Shea made his appearance in the witness-box.

This fateful personage in the Parnell tragedy stepped on the stage in the light comedy make up, in which, in our modern life, the Muse attires herself. He was dressed with supreme care; had, if I do not mistake, a florid flower in his buttonhole, and looked the prosperous, self-possessed,

self-confident man of society, slightly inclined to the *embonpoint* that spoke of good dinners greatly enjoyed and pleasantly digested. He told his tale with the admirable art that conceals art, quietly, frankly, with scrupulous regard to accuracy—correcting even his counsel in some details.

This prosperous and well-satisfied figure stood out in strange relief against the background of tragedy and doom, as he aimed stab after stab at the heart of a man whom he had once called his friend. If anything were wanting to accentuate the meaning of the portentous scene, it was to be found in the figure of the other combatant in this silent, fierce, awful duel to death. Mr. Parnell sat haggard, hollow-cheeked—even his attenuated neck speaking of the progress of disease and the harrowing of suffering and suspense. His hair, which even in its thinness and straightness, gave also the suggestion of broken health, hung down almost to his shoulders in unkempt disorder; and then, that dreadful look of a soul in the clutch of a passion demoniac in its intensity, in its greed of revenge, in its frenzy to slay!

But, in the duels which have law courts for their meeting ground, it is not the principals that wield the sword or fire the pistol: it was through Sir Charles Russell that Mr. Parnell had to strike at his enemy. Never, perhaps, in even his full career, has the great advocate found himself in a position of such difficulty. He probably knew as

well as everybody else, except Mr. Parnell, that the clue to which Mr. Parnell was so desperately clinging, led to nowhere; and, even worse, was diverting attention from the road that led direct to the real criminal. Mr. George Lewis knew it also; and, therefore, was not instructing his counsel in cross-examination that followed up this blind alley. Sir Charles would probably have willingly evaded the duty; but here was this desperate, infuriated, obstinate man, possessed by the demon of a fixed idea, and for all his counsel knew, with depths of information, which his suspicious nature had kept from every eye; and there was nothing for Sir Charles but to ask some, at least, of the questions that with voice hoarse with rage, Mr. Parnell put into his mouth. Let me dismiss the scene finally by saying that Captain O'Shea was examined before Pigott, and that he swore to his belief in the genuineness of a signature which it was afterwards shown Pigott had forged.

And now one word more with regard to this trial. Very often Mr. Parnell came down to the Court with a small black bag. He stuck to this bag with a tenacity and vigilance that scarcely ever relaxed; but I believe, on one occasion he lost it, and it found its way to Scotland Yard. The bag was opened—possibly with some trepidation, certainly with some curiosity. It was found to contain a pair of woollen stockings, which

Mr. Parnell had brought down with him to put on in case there was any risk of his having wet feet!

And at last, the great vindication came, the details of which we all know so well and so freshly remember. Then there burst forth one of those extraordinary revulsions of feeling which are so characteristic of the English people. When they once feel that they have done injustice to a man, no reparation is too complete. Fashion and snobbery take up the cry that justice has raised; and a man whom everybody has been denouncing or avoiding as a demon, becomes a hero, a social lion, a popular idol. I quote from an excellent "Extra" of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, a spirited account of some of the scenes of triumph in which Parnell took part:—

"I have no more questions to ask you, Mr. Parnell," said the Attorney-General on May 7. And no sooner was the cross-examination over than Mr. Parnell was elected an honorary life member of the National Liberal Club—a club which, strangely enough, he was to denounce one day as the hot-bed of English dictation, and was voted the freedom of the City of Edinburgh, an honour of which he was presently to be stripped on the motion of those who had first proposed it. Indeed, from the day when Pigott absconded, a kind of personal *Schwärmerei* set in for Mr. Parnell. The Irish Leader has of late spoken with contempt and indignation of Irishmen who accept English hospitality. But the remarkable scene when Mr. Parnell was entertained for the second time at the Eighty Club on March 8, 1889, will not soon be forgotten. 'Quietly and unostentatiously,' wrote the *Pall Mall Gazette's* representative, 'Mr. Parnell walked up to his seat—accompanied the while by deafening cheers and waving of handkerchiefs. He began to sit

down, but looking round at his immediate neighbours, he saw Lord Spencer. The thought transferred itself from one to the other, and, stretching across Lord Rosebery and the chairman, the "Red Earl" and the "Uncrowned King" shook hands. It was the shaking of hands between two nations, the burying of the historic animosities of England, the last consecrating touch to those long-life efforts, sometimes only partial in their effect but always sincere in their intention, by which Mr. Gladstone had sought to pacify Ireland and consolidate the empire.'

"A few days later, a yet more remarkable scene occurred. It was on the occasion of a great Liberal gathering held in Mr. Parnell's honour in the St. James's Hall—the very place which, eighteen months later, was to ring with denunciations of his wrong-doing. 'Mr. Parnell rose pale and tall'—we quote again from the *Pall Mall Gazette* report, March 14—'with his left arm in a sling, a great white flower in his button-hole, and confronted the audience. In a moment, everyone was up, and for the next five minutes St. James's Hall was even as Exeter Hall when the Salvation Army has a great field day. Cheer followed cheer in endless succession. The whole hall was white with handkerchiefs. Ladies waved their scarves and cheered; then waved their scarves and cheered again, as if they would never stop.'

"But perhaps the position of Mr. Parnell as English Hero was manifested most clearly of all at a soirée of the Women's Liberal Association held at the Grosvenor Gallery a few months later, in the summer of 1889. Both Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Parnell were present, but the latter was as much the lion of the evening as the former. The affectionate interest taken in the Irish Leader (wrote a representative of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, May 23) was the most notable because the most novel feature of the evening. He never showed his head for a moment above the crowd without calling forth cheers; and two or three gentlemen who were temporarily mistaken for him seemed considerably surprised at the warmth of their reception. 'There he is,' 'There he goes,' one heard on all sides. 'Mr. Parnell, I *must* shake hands with you,' they said; and, '*I* managed to shake his hand,' was the proud boast afterwards. 'How ill he looks,' said this one; 'But how refined,' said the other."

There was but one thing more wanted. When he rose to address the House of Commons for the first time after the exposure of the plot against him, all the Irish and all the Liberal members stood up, and there was a wild outburst of cheers. One requires to be very familiar with the House of Commons, with its self-control, its cynicism, its unwillingness to part from ordinary habit, to understand the full significance of this most extraordinary demonstration. In the eleven exciting years I have been in the House of Commons, I only saw it once before ; and that was on the great day when Mr. Gladstone brought in his Home Rule Bill. In all his great career of triumphs, this was also the one occasion on which he had received this supreme greeting.

And thus, Fate heaped glory on glory on the head of Parnell, as if in the very ecstacy of a desire to make his fall the more striking and complete.

CHAPTER IX.

BLACK RUIN.

MR. PARNELL'S triumphs finally wound up in his being received as the honoured guest and confidential ally of the great English leader, at Hawarden. He came from Hawarden straight to Liverpool, and there received an ovation from both his countrymen and the leaders of the Liberal party. He was the guest of one of the best-known and highest-minded Liberals in Liverpool, Mr. Edward Evans, Jun. They stopped talking until an advanced hour in the morning, and, visiting Mr. Edward Evans a short time afterwards, I was told some of the conversation. It will be remembered that, in the speech he delivered to his Liberal host at Liverpool, Mr. Parnell expressed his strong confidence in Mr. Gladstone. I am bound, however, in perfect candour, to add that, a short time afterwards, meeting Mr. O'Brien, he expressed his apprehension that some of the people around Mr. Gladstone would try to induce him to narrow the extent of the next Home Rule measure,

expressing, at the same time, it is also necessary to add, his confidence that Mr. Gladstone was strong and honest enough to resist this pressure. How complete his confidence in Mr. Gladstone was is shown by one of his observations to Mr. Evans. He was forecasting the next House of Commons, with its overwhelming Liberal majority, crowding on to the seats on the Ministerial side of the House, and, as part of the picture, he spoke of the Liberal benches being also occupied by the Irish members crossing from their old place on the other side of the House. I was startled when Mr. Evans repeated this to me, and asked him, with some surprise, "Did he say that?" And the surprise was quite natural, for such a change of seats appeared to me not altogether in consonance with the principle on which Mr. Parnell and his colleagues had always insisted, that of sitting on the Opposition side of the House, in that protest against Government from Westminster, which, as I have already said, we desire to make always visible and obvious.

While Mr. Parnell was discussing with Mr. Gladstone the features of the new Home Rule Bill, Mrs. O'Shea was closeted with Mr. George Lewis discussing the chances of the action for divorce, the coming of which she had learned some weeks before. On December 28th the blow came; it was announced that Captain O'Shea had filed his petition for divorce, and that he had made Mr.

Parnell the co-respondent. Mr. Parnell, however, received the blow at first, at least, with characteristic calmness, and, I believe, was for a long time convinced that it would have no effect whatever on his political fortunes. That was in 1889. He came down to the House during the Session of 1890 with his old equable air. Of course, nobody even breathed the subject to him, but there had been written communications between him and some of his friends. Everybody can imagine the surprised horror with which he, one day, sitting at dinner, calmly alluded to Captain O'Shea in reference to one of the points of controversy between that gentleman and the late Mr. Forster. Mr. Parnell declared that of the two gentlemen, he preferred to believe Mr. Forster. In this Session he occasionally appeared and made speeches, and altogether conducted himself as if nothing in the world had been changed in the situation, and as if his position in Irish politics in the future was just as assured as it had been in the long years of his unbroken supremacy.

Now I come to a matter which was the subject of bitter controversy. It was one of the charges against Mr. Parnell that he misled some of his friends as to the truth of the charge brought against him, and some of his worst English assailants have made his representations, in this respect, the basis of their chief attacks. One of his most vehement denouncers made, not his adultery, but his menda-

city, the burden of the attack upon him. I do not question, in the least, the veracity of the gentlemen who had communications with Mr. Parnell, but I do most strongly question the accuracy of their recollection. It is quite true that Mr. Parnell may have said that he would come out of the trial with his character untarnished. He certainly so wrote to one of his most affectionate and faithful friends. His secretary used to me almost the identical language, but as far back as a day or two after the first commencement of the divorce proceedings, Mr. Parnell had seen Mr. Tuohy, the London correspondent of the *Freeman's Journal*, and Mr. Tuohy told me, a day or two afterwards, that while he made many other observations, Mr. Parnell never made any attempt to deny the central fact of the story. What Mr. Parnell probably meant was indicated by a few words he spoke a day after his election by his party, in which, lifting, as he said, a corner of the curtain, he denied emphatically that he had betrayed friendship, abused hospitality, or broken up a happy and united home; that is, Mr. Parnell thought that while the adultery could not be denied, the circumstances could be shown to be in no way of an aggravated character. What facts there were in the position of Mrs. O'Shea when he met her; what appeals were made to his chivalry and generosity, nobody but she can tell; but it may be that the circumstances seemed to Parnell to be of the same character as those which

in the case of Lancelot made his dishonour honourable, and his falsehood truth.

The last time I ever spoke to Mr. Parnell in friendship was in the lobby of the House of Commons during the recess of 1890. The mission to America was then in contemplation, and I had been asked to meet Mr. Parnell, as he wished to impress upon me the desirability of my forming part of the delegation. The occasion is one never to be forgotten, especially with the events of the last few months to bring it out into relief. He was dressed, after his strange fashion, in about the unlikeliest of all garbs for a serious interview in the precincts of the House. He had on a shooting jacket with lapels and all the other adornments of that *negligé* costume. His face was bright with the effect of sunshine and sunburnt. He sat on the chair with his old position of ease and strength; and he answered, in reply to an enquiry, that he never felt better in his life. For years he certainly had never looked so well.

His spirits were equally high. What rendered this the more remarkable was that the action for divorce was already close at hand. Of course, there was no allusion to the subject, though he afterwards made it a matter of argument that his colleagues had known of his trouble all through. It speaks very much for their delicacy, and also, it should be said, of their awe of him, that the subject was never hinted at in his presence even once

during all the long years it had been suspected. But the intent looks with which his friends doubtless examined his face at this interview were suggested by the thoughts of the coming trial—I was going to write catastrophe ; but nobody ever thought that it would end so disastrously. There was infinite faith in Mr. Parnell's luck, for one thing. "He's like a cat," said Mr. Biggar once, when fortune had come to Mr. Parnell's rescue in spite of his own efforts to hurt himself, "he always lands on his feet." Seated there in the lonely and silent but sunlit library—the interview was during the Parliamentary recess—chatting gaily and hopefully, lord of himself and apparently master of his fate and of his nation,—that is my last recollection of Mr. Parnell in the days of his unbroken command of a great party.

The Irish envoys in America received a welcome, enthusiastic and generous, far beyond their most sanguine expectations. Everywhere the air was electric with the feeling that the Home Rule fight was practically over, and that the Home Rule cause would in a year or two be finally triumphant. This added enthusiasm and generosity to every meeting. In some cities we were able to hold two vast gatherings on two successive days; and in Boston we held two immense gatherings on the same day. The subscriptions reached proportions that had never been reached before, until in New York city, in the course of one

hour, subscriptions were announced amounting to close upon £8,000. It was perfectly clear that the last difficulty in our way was about to be removed, and we were to receive from America enough to support every evicted tenant, to maintain every combination, to meet every item, of even the vast expenditure which a general election would involve; and then, in the midst of it all, came the divorce case!

There, as here, the first feeling was one of relief. There were some grotesque details; but, on the whole the story was free from the elements of fickleness, and the vulgarity which make the worst offences of illicit unions. Then came the first mutterings of the gathering storm in England, and then a telegram from our colleagues in Dublin announcing the Leinster Hall meeting. And here I may tell the story of the cablegram which was despatched to that meeting, and which formed the staple topic of so many of Mr. Parnell's speeches and those of his supporters. The determination amongst us all was that we would save Mr. Parnell if we possibly could. With one single exception, there was not one of us who regarded the divorce action in itself as a reason why Parnell should no longer be accepted as our leader; we were politicians, not censors or moralists. Frightened by the hideous effect of unloosed passions that the struggle for the leadership might involve; under the spell of that wondrous leadership of

nearly eleven years, with all its unbroken triumphs; appalled, above all things, by the prospect of anything that would destroy the argosy of our hopes at the moment it was entering into the port of success—our whole political judgment was in favour of Mr. Parnell's leadership, and our hearts followed our judgment. The Mr. Parnell of that time had developed none of the ugly qualities which—alas!—cloud his last days; to us he was still a man of high and pure spirit, not, of course, without human weaknesses, not without pettiness, but still, on the whole, lofty far above the average; and his considerateness, our pride in his glory, in his strength, and his conquests over so many foes of our race, brought out all the love we felt for him. In addition to all this, there was the feeling that judgment on such tragedies as those of Mr. Parnell, to be just, must be slow and charitable and fully informed.

There were other causes of work in us. The cablegrams, though full, necessarily did not publish everything that was said and written on this side, and the spicy is what the journalist naturally selects when he has to make the choice between what he will use and what throw away in the embarrassing wealth of material. The specimens we received, then, of English opinion were the ribald, arrogant, and, I may say, brutal attacks on Mr. Parnell, which came from persons I do not

care even to name. To see this mighty leader the target for every drab and scullion who wished to rise into notoriety on the corpse of his reputation and his great place, as a potent, successful, and loved leader of a people from servitude to liberty, it was more than flesh and blood could bear; and to-day, with time to cool my blood, I say deliberately that, next to Mr. Parnell, the greatest factors in producing the destructive war in which, for a time, all Ireland's hopes of liberty seemed destined to perish, were some of his early assailants.

I have had to learn all about the Leinster Hall meeting since my return; but I can gather that that meeting was produced by the very attacks which so deeply influenced our minds in America. There were other circumstances as well which account for that gathering—so fatal, but so generous a mistake. Mr. McCarthy was asked, many months after by Mr. Healy, what had induced him to come over from England in that tempestuous time of year; and Mr. McCarthy's answer was that he came because he thought Mr. Healy was coming, too. Mr. Healy's signature was to the telegram that begged Mr. McCarthy to come over, but Mr. Healy denies that he gave any authorization for his signature being so used. Then Mr. McCarthy naturally asked Mr. Healy why he had gone to the meeting, and Mr. Healy had to confess that his main reason had been the presence of

Mr. McCarthy; and so by this vicious circle the two men had been brought to the meeting.

And here were we in America, with the telegram before us announcing this meeting—as we thought, of all the party, unanimously and in obedience to the resistless voice of our own people, and begging a word of encouragement from us. What choice was left us? If we remained silent, our motives would be misconstrued; while we were resolved not to utter a word which might stand in the way of Parnell's recovery of his position. I drafted the cablegram—which was afterwards published almost in the words that have now become historic. Mr. O'Brien was not in New York; Mr. Dillon, Mr. Gill, and myself—I forget whether Mr. Harrington was there or not—discussed the situation.

In defence of Mr. Dillon, I am bound to say that the Leinster Hall meeting filled him with anxiety. Odious as were to him the kind of attacks which were made on Parnell in some English quarters, he knew there were other sections of English opinions whose condemnation would come from higher and better motives; and I remember well he described the meeting as a provocation and a challenge that might have the gravest consequences.

I had to go "down town," as it is called in New York; on my way back, I found in an evening paper an article from the *Freeman's*

Journal, defending Parnell's leadership in the most vehement terms. I did not know anything of the inside management of the *Freeman's Journal* at this moment; I took it for granted it was guided with the same judgment which had always been displayed in its management; that it represented average, moderate opinion; especially that it could speak for the opinions of the priesthood. If this were true—if the priesthood of Ireland were as strong as anybody in defence of a man charged with an offence which they would be naturally expected to most reprobate—then it was clear that Ireland wanted Parnell, and that we ought not to stand back from our countrymen in upholding the leader we trusted and loved.

I showed the article to Mr. Dillon. It produced a great impression upon him, and he left that evening to have a conference with Mr. O'Brien, who had gone there to speak at Buffalo, with a copy of the suggested telegram in his pocket. In the meantime, there had been some slight indication of the leanings of Mr. O'Brien, in a brief sentence in an American paper. He also had mistrusted the Leinster Hall meeting; and, with a prescience which ought to be recognized, suggested that Mr. Gladstone should be consulted as to the state of English opinion. But the same considerations weighed with him as with the rest of us, and the cablegram was sent.

We had not to wait long for proof of the

approach of the tempest we sought to avert. We woke to find the letter of Mr. Gladstone in the papers, and then we knew that the crisis had come. The first impression, however, on our minds of the publication of Mr. Gladstone's letter was to put us strongly on Parnell's side. And we were careful, as will be seen in our manifesto, to make clear our dissent from the manner of its publication. Undoubtedly the manner in which that letter was published was a gross blunder, and I have heard was due to the characteristic stupidity of a gentleman whose craving for notoriety and invincible incompetence had led Mr. Gladstone into an ignominious difficulty before.

Meantime, the day was coming when we had to go to a city where the advent of such a crisis was most inopportune. Chicago was raging in a fierce faction fight. We all met at Cincinnati to discuss the situation; Mr. Parnell had sent telegrams to Mr. Dillon and Mr. O'Brien, informing them that he was about to issue a manifesto, and asking them to withhold judgment until they had seen it. Our final judgment was withheld, then, till we saw the manifesto; though, by this time, most of us had begun to think that the leadership of Parnell was hopeless. As the day wore on, the different delegates arrived at Cincinnati from the widely separated points where they had been speaking. On Saturday, November 29th, in the dim light of a foggy morning, we started out for our journey to Chicago,

and a minute after taking our seats, were deep in the perusal of Mr. Parnell's famous manifesto. It throws a very curious light on Mr. Parnell's mind that he should have thought that such a manifesto was likely to bring intelligent, or generous, or honourable men round to his views. Its effect on every member of the delegation — except Mr. Harrington, whom I do not wish to describe otherwise than perfectly honest in his whole opinions — was immediate ; indignation, disbelief, disgust, despair, were so quickly and clearly roused, that we rushed out to the first station from which it was possible to send a cablegram, and announced to our colleagues that from this time forward we were to be counted among the opponents of Mr. Parnell's leadership. It has been represented that we acted on the cablegrams of others—false and incorrect and unjust to Mr. Parnell ; our judgment, as will be seen, was finally reached on Mr. Parnell's own words.

I hasten rapidly towards the close of the narrative. This is not the place to re-tell the story of Committee Room XV., nor of the Kilkenny fight, nor of the Boulogne negotiations. I returned to England towards the middle of March, all my colleagues had preceded me ; the cause in America was, for the moment, dead.

I did not see Mr. Parnell till some time after my return, and not until, in a speech to my constituents, I had definitely declared my opposition to

his leadership. I had never for one moment since the issue of the manifesto, wavered in the idea that this was the only rational course.

Some nights after, I met Mr. Parnell and spoke to him for the last time. He was passing through one of the lobbies. Instinct was too strong; I went up and we shook hands; I asked him how he was. He answered gaily, but I thought also rather disagreeably, "Oh! perfectly well; much better than you are."

I was struck by the terrible change in his appearance. How different from the man whom I met not six months before in that same building—sunny, healthy, kindly. Now, there was a hideous glitter in his eye—the softness, the fun, the shyness with which its somewhat stony depths were illuminated, had all vanished. Hate, fierceness, desperate determination, and a look of death—these were what I then saw. His complexion was also strangely changed, and the whole aspect of his face. In the previous September or August the cheeks were thin; now they were flabby; and to the brown, sunburnt look of the former time had succeeded a ghastly pallor. And, when afterwards, I saw him in the House, sitting alone and silent—for but few of his supporters ever appeared in the House—he looked terribly lonely. He sat amid the visible ruins he himself had made of the greatest Parliamentary position in these times. The effect was so great upon me that I always had

to rise and leave the House when I found myself near him. The gulf of silence and restraint and enmity—if he so felt to me—I could not so feel to him—stretching between us on those very benches where I had sat by his side for nearly eleven years, was more than I could bear.

And just once again I saw him under peculiar circumstances. I went over to Dublin a few weeks ago to attend the meetings of the Parliamentary Committee which had been substituted for the one-man power of the deposed leader. As I walked to the boat at Kingstown, I saw in front of me a figure that I had known for so many years, dressed in a long tweed ulster, walking quickly, carrying his own bag, and evidently desirous to escape all observation. I recognized the Irish leader, though his back was to me. I never saw him again after that brief glance. It was characteristic of him that he always sought on the Holyhead boat some cabins in the front part, which were remote from the general saloon, and whose existence was even unknown to most travellers. In one of these cabins, probably, he spent the night. And on the platform at Euston I did not see him—indeed, I did not look for him. The partings of close political friendships is an experience, the bitterness and anguish of which are known only to those who have passed through it.

He has been described as "murdered;" but

the one hand that struck him down was his own. Strangely enough, the idea that he would one day ruin himself was familiar to his colleagues for many years. As far back as 1882—when those terrible absences, and that strange change in him first began—I heard Mr. Healy make the observation I have already quoted: that the English had destroyed another great Irishman. At the same period, I said, myself, that there was only one man could ever ruin Parnell, and that was himself. Either then, or a little later, Mr. Healy applied to him with that picturesqueness of illustration he commands, the story of Napoleon. Napoleon, looking out through a window, as one of his Marshals was advising him against the Russian campaign, asked his counsellor to look at the sky and see Napoleon's star there. "I see no star," said the Marshal. "I do," said Napoleon, and impatiently shut the window. So, said Healy, it is with Parnell; he sees his star where others see only darkness; and some day he will be ruined in that way. These, and other sayings of Mr. Healy, were uttered, not with the gleeful forecast of an enemy, but with the agony of a friend who saw the ruin of the man he loved.

There was one other forecast which I quote as showing singular foresight. One of the things that was a painful surprise to Mr. Parnell's most intimate friends, was the dogged persistence with which he clung to the leadership, after most people

saw that it could only be held at the expense of the liberties of his country. Our whole conception of his character was that he was free from ambition; that he cared nothing for the pomp and circumstance and glory of his position; and that in all probability, he would welcome the hour which would sound his liberation from the post of painful and laborious duty. But as far back as 1882 or 1883, he sat at a restaurant in the Strand with Mr. Sexton and myself, and we were discussing some covert attack that had been made on him a short time before. He alluded to it entirely without temper, with his eyes in that abstracted look which they often had; and I thought that he did not attach any importance to the business. But this was not the observation of Mr. Sexton; he remarked, after Parnell had gone away, that we were wrong in supposing that Mr. Parnell would give up his place without a struggle. His face, said Mr. Sexton, twitched with excitement when he alluded to the attack. "Believe me, he will fight with the claws of a tiger if he is ever seriously attacked," said Mr. Sexton.

Mr. Justin McCarthy saw him a couple of weeks before his death. He startled the household by driving up there at eleven o'clock at night. He spoke to his former colleague as though there had never been a word between them. Together they went over old accounts that had to be paid, in the friendliest manner. There was no allusion to

general politics, and especially to the great controversy which divided the two former allies. Just once Parnell did mention some controversial matter; but he immediately pulled up and said, "I mustn't consult you about that." He smoked some of the small light cigars which he always carried with him, and which alone he could smoke. He had kept a cab waiting outside all the time. He had written several letters, and Justin McCarthy offered to post them. Parnell then went, and Justin McCarthy rushed to the pillar-box. He looked at his watch; it was just a quarter-past three. He had asked Parnell where he was going. He said, to Ireland, by the quarter-past seven train in the morning, remarking that he would have little time for sleep. Justin McCarthy ventured to suggest that this constant travelling backwards and forwards would injure him. No, he said, he thought it did him good.

There was a strange contrast between his allusions to his health during the last nine months and in previous periods. He was rather hypochondriacal in olden times; and a colleague of his told me that he rarely ever met him that he did not speak uneasily about his health. He certainly gave it as the chief reason why, for years, he could not attend a public meeting. I have seen him come down to the House when the look of death was on his face, and when his hollow cheeks pointed to an early grave. Three years ago, several people said

to me that Parnell was a doomed man. I have also seen him during a portion of this period so weak that a speech of a few minutes sent him into a perspiration, and left him breathless and exhausted. One terrible day I especially remember. He had dragged himself down to the House; some unpleasant thing had to be brought before him; patiently, but with such a pathetic look of pain, he listened; but said he had to go away. This was the day when Biggar—who had struck him so many blows in his hatred to his association with Captain O'Shea—felt again all the old feeling of affection, and running off, burst into a flood of tears.

But in the last nine months, as everybody has remarked, he rarely spoke without an allusion to death, and his own determination to live down and survive his enemies. "Suppose Mr. Parnell died," said Mr. Healy, in one of the debates in Committee Room XV.

Here is the reply from the report:—

"Mr. PARNELL: I don't intend to die (loud cheers)."

It is also a noteworthy circumstance that in the last speech he ever made, there are constant allusions to the same idea. This speech was delivered at Creggs, Co. Roscommon. When he arrived in Roscommon, his friends were shocked at his haggard appearance. He was suffering from rheumatism; carried his arm in a sling at the meeting next day, where, however, he denounced his enemies with great fire, and declared that his doctors had advised

him to go to bed instead of attending the meeting. But he had to come there because if he had not done so, the seceders would have declared that he was beaten; they were anxious to bury him even before he was dead. Some people thought that such boasts were not in good taste; nor were they. But we know now better what lay behind them. It was not his enemies that poor Parnell was answering and defying. It was the voice within his own breast—small and still, but louder than shout of mob, faster than rush of steamer and train—the voice that warned him that the shears of Fate were ready, and that death would conquer his unconquerable spirit.

He must have returned from this last meeting very ill, but he abated not a jot of his resolution; and as he got into the Holyhead boat at Kingstown, announced that he would come over on Saturday week. And so he did, poor man, but it was with his great spirit extinguished.

The illness that finally bore him off undoubtedly received its final aggravation at the Creggs meeting, and when disease came, the overworked and outworn system had no strength left for resistance. The strong spirit had worn out the earthly tenement. He died, as is known, on October 6th, with the storm roaring and the rain beating against the windows of the room in the exposed house where he had lived his short married life.

CHAPTER X.

CHARACTERISTICS AND ESTIMATE.

FIRST as to Mr. Parnell's appearance. As he was, so he looked. The iron resolution, the impenetrable reserve, the frigid fanaticism were written in his lithe figure, and still more in the strange, striking, unique countenance. Before ill-health lined and hollowed it, his face was one of the handsomest in the House of Commons. The nose was long, large, straight, well chiselled ; the mouth was small and well carved, but mobile with pride, passion, and scorn ; the voice was clear, sure, and penetrating, and, when he was excited, could be thrilling, so that sometimes you could imagine that it had a power to control, and even terrorise, the House of Commons ; his forehead was beautiful,—perfectly round, white, and lofty. But, after all, in looking at him, as in the case of every remarkable man, the eyes were the most striking feature. They were the most meaning eyes I have ever seen. They were of the hard dark sort, which you see in the Red Indian—red-brown, like flint ;

but who can describe their varying lights and expressions? Sometimes you thought they never changed, for they certainly never revealed anything; at others, they seemed to flash and burn; and they always had a strange glow in them that arrested your attention. It was this latent expression that suggested to so many people the impression that his end would be tragic. I once heard a poet declare that with such a face and air, Mr. Parnell was foredoomed to the scaffold. The reality has proved almost worse than such forecasts, for he has died prematurely and sorrowfully amid the hideous discord of faction, where once he had stood on an eminence as unquestioned as ever a human leader enjoyed.

He was always a very simple eater, and never seemed to care for creature comforts in any shape. He was not a man to accept death submissively. Combative, unimaginative, obstinate, he would fight for life with the same unconquerable tenacity with which he would defend anything else which he believed to be his right, and accordingly he made a desperate struggle for years against the advance of disease. He used to eat rather heartily—though only twice a day; but he drank sparingly, and usually only the thinnest of claret and Rhine wine. Indeed, in many ways he was a natural ascetic. But he was told by his doctor that he ate unwisely the wrong things at the wrong time; and he was put on a strict *régime* which he

faithfully carried out. He usually sat at the same table; and in the old days of a united party there were three or four colleagues who always shared the repast. There, the waiter would bring in carefully-toasted brown bread, a small fried sole, and a bird, with a pint of Moselle wine, to which dinner he rigidly adhered.

In the regulation of his own affairs, he was extremely careless, and was constantly muddling things. But in all public affairs he was tight-fisted, or, as the Irish put it, "near." I remember a salary was once proposed, which I thought too low. He insisted on the more moderate amount. He also spent very little money on himself. He told me that his personal expenses did not amount to more than three or four hundred a year; but I believe he was a very generous man in money matters. The stories about his neglect of his mother were all calumnies.

He always found it very difficult to think in a crowd or with any noise around him. Physically, his nervous system was most sensitive. He told a friend that the reason he had to give up asking questions was that he could not stand the strain of waiting for his turn. I often heard him declare, with a look of obfuscation, that he could not even think in the House of Commons; and that, perhaps, accounted partly for his absence from it.

He had curious fits of abstraction that almost

suggested the temporary interruption of his thinking powers. In later years, when his physical weakness came, these were more frequent. This was one of the reasons why he used to stumble into the most appalling blunders; but I may say with truth that whenever he rose to address the House on an occasion of grave importance, his colleagues were in a state of anguish lest he should fall into some such blunder.

One of the instances of this temporal aberration was his famous answer at the Commission about deceiving the House. He had been a considerable time in the box, and that morning he looked *distrait*, so that some of his friends knew by instinctive anticipation that he would say something wrong in sheer weariness and absent-mindedness. The blood of every friend of his ran cold as he used this awful expression. When he sat down, he was quite surprised to be told that he had committed a dreadful blunder.

He was often unconscious of his surroundings, and thus was constantly doing things which provoked wonder or a smile. He would, for instance, sit down at a table in the dining-room of the House next some crusty Tory, who would have been as comfortable with the society of a ghost; but Parnell would eat on, without even knowing who was next him. I saw him once at a meeting of his party, at a grave moment, get up calmly and lead a red setter out of the room.

He was extremely fond of animals and of children. Once he fined a man heavily for cruelty to a donkey; but I believe this vindication of humanity was rather interfered with by another member of the family paying the fine.

A stranger visiting the House of Commons would find it hard to understand why it was that he produced such an effect there. He stumbled constantly, had a very scant vocabulary, and by no means a large stock of ideas. He was also very careless in the preparation of his materials, and put off things to the last moment. It was quite common to find him ploughing laboriously through figures—of which he had no mastery whatever—in the Library at the moment when he should have been in his place, expecting to be called. On such occasions his colleagues went through untold agonies. They never believed that he would be in his place in time; and it was only at the last moment that he would appear, armed with bundles of papers, badly arranged and badly digested. But the House of Commons is as sensitive as a barometer to personal character, and it always felt the full force of this extraordinary man's strength when he rose to address it, and yet to a stranger there would be no indication whatever of the strength. He spoke in a somewhat low tone of voice, and often with an inattention to his audience that made the speech sound more like a soliloquy than words addressed to

other men. But on rare occasions there were outbursts of that raging fire of fierce and devastating passion that burned within. Then the whole tone of the voice changed. It had a hoarse, sullen sound, the mouth became almost cruel, and the right arm was held forth in denunciation. I have seen the House of Commons literally quail before one of those outbursts of savage, though apparently cold rage, and the remark was once made by a colleague that he looked almost like an Invincible in one of those accesses of passion. He himself hated speaking, and always went through agonies of nervousness when he had to prepare, and even after he had begun. The hands twitching behind, the nails dug into the palms, showed the price he had to pay.

But nevertheless it was all wonderfully effective. The House always grew still in recent years whenever he rose to speak, and even the Tories treated him with a marked respect. He was best in a moment of rage. The most effective little speech I ever heard him make was a brief attack he made on Mr. Chamberlain one night. He spoke of having first made the acquaintance of the member for Birmingham when he betrayed to him the secrets of the Cabinet to which he belonged; and so on through a lava-tide of denunciation which roused the House to an extraordinary pitch of excitement. The next day he continued the speech, but he fumbled hope-

lessly. He was the most uncertain of speakers, and often spoke worst at moments of portentous importance.

In most Parliamentary gifts he was vastly inferior to some of his colleagues. He never could master figures; and was unready with amendments and with suggestions. But he was a consummate tactician. By an instinct, he seemed to know the right thing to do. His conduct of the proceedings in Committee Room XV. showed this. But I never regarded him as a highly intellectual man. He was, I believe, essentially narrow. It is to this narrowness I attribute the final mistake of his life. The effect of my political experience is to convince me that political wrong-doing is often an unconscious intellectual instead of a conscious moral wrong-doing; and I believe that Parnell was led by his strange fanaticism and narrowness into the hopeless contest on which he entered. It was also the result of that miscalculation to which I have already alluded. When Justin McCarthy told him before the meeting which elected him what Mr. Gladstone had said, his reply was to pooh-pooh the whole business as a mere Nonconformist howl which would die out, if defied.

One of the reasons for his attitude, I also believe, was that latent dislike of Englishmen which he never got over. I see, in an interesting article by Mr. L. J. Jennings, that in a conversation

he had with him during the great fight in Committee Room XV., he spoke with bitterness of Mr. Gladstone and others, but not of his own colleagues.

I have said that he was not a man to cherish resentment. He was capable of a burning hatred, and when he formed a prejudice against a man, he rarely got over it. But he was not very quick to entertain dislike of a vehement character. I remember talking to him once after a scene in which one of his early colleagues had denounced him with great effect, and amid the tremendous cheering of the House. To my surprise, he spoke rather kindly of the man, and expressed the regret that he had been driven by the intolerance of others into opposition to his party.

It is doubtful if he felt very deeply half the horrible things he said in his latest speeches. He used vituperation simply as the weapon which he thought suited best the fight he was waging. He spoke to some of his colleagues whom he had just been denouncing as though nothing had ever occurred to break the harmony of their relations.

The first time I saw a real sign of the change in Parnell's nerves, was after the attack of Mr. Forster. I sat next to him all through that terribly trying time, he bore the ordeal very well ; but when I met him in the lobby afterwards as he came from a room where he had been washing his hands, I observed that his cheeks were flushed. He

refused to speak that night. There were loud hot shouts for him at the end of the night, but he sat still and had to be forced into speech. He spoke the next day, his reply was brief and somewhat deprecatory. He spoke of Mr. Forster and himself being alike in having fallen into the ditch. He was profoundly depressed by the Phœnix Park assassination, but I also think that he was weakened by the then unfamiliar sense of the risk he was running of exposure and ruin.

Finally, as to an estimate of the man, it is too early yet to speak the ultimate judgment. I do not envy the man who, having been his colleague for years, does not feel a pang of bitter sorrow, now that he lies dead; and under the influence of that emotion, judgments are likely to be partial. I do not regard him as a man of broad mind or vision, of first-class official capacity, nor of a judgment that was always trustworthy.

The strength of Parnell was character rather than intellect. But the more you say in depreciation of the intellectual side, the more you at the same time raise the estimate of his strength of character. What that strength was, the whole world has learned to know. To bad ends and to self-destruction, the same terrible strength of will and tenacity of purpose were devoted, which formerly were given to noble and wise ends, but the qualities remained the same amid their diverse employment. Parnell defying and conquering the

whole British Parliament, was not a more picturesque, or daring, or potent figure than Parnell fighting week after week his desperate and forlorn struggle against the Irish nation.

No words can adequately describe his influence over his followers. A struggle like that of the Irish is bound to bring to its foremost ranks men of unusual strength of character, and amid the followers of Mr. Parnell, there were many with a will as stubborn, a resolution as inflexible as his own; and yet all these were as clay in the potter's hands when he chose to exercise his power; and his subjugation of his race, restless, fissiparous, so widely separated, and torn with faction, into one great composite, united and absolutely obedient whole, is one of the most remarkable achievements of political leadership in the history of mankind.

Or if you want any further proof of the greatness of Parnell, read the description of his funeral last Sunday. But a few days before, and the overwhelming majority in Ireland saw in him a danger to the cause of the nation, and opposed, and even in some cases, hated him. But his death brought back his old supremacy; the leadership, which had fallen from the hand of the living, was grasped once more in the cold and nerveless hand of death, so that people even fought for the splinters of the wooden casement that had enclosed his coffin.

No, there is no doubt about Parnell's greatness. He was a portent, a great and tragic exception to Nature's ordinary laws, like an eclipse or an earthquake.

THE END.

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